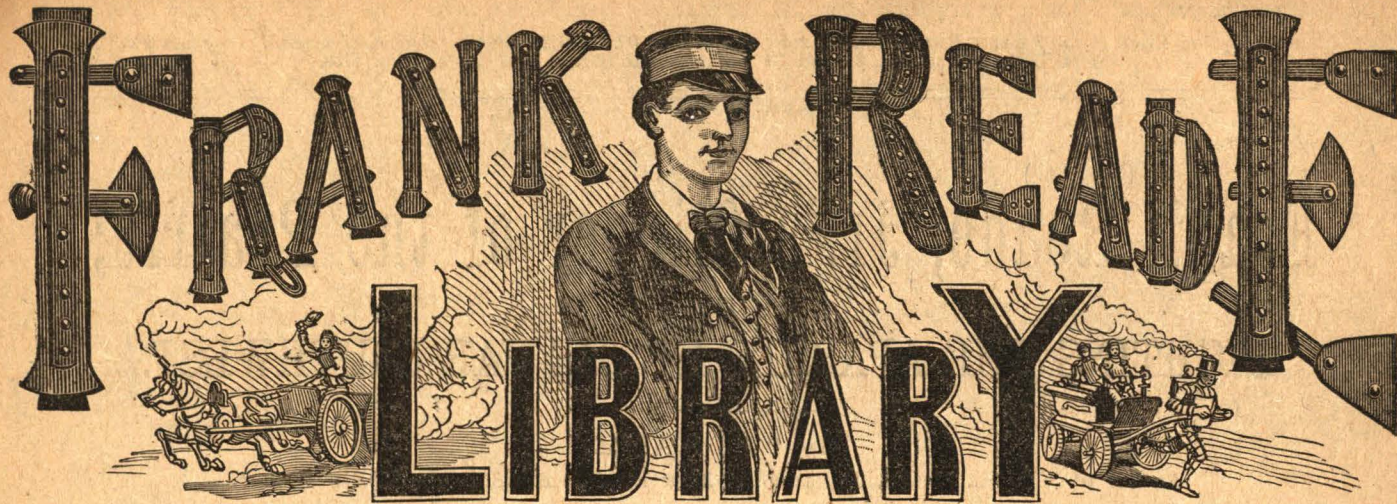


"Noname's" Latest and Best Stories are Published in This Library.



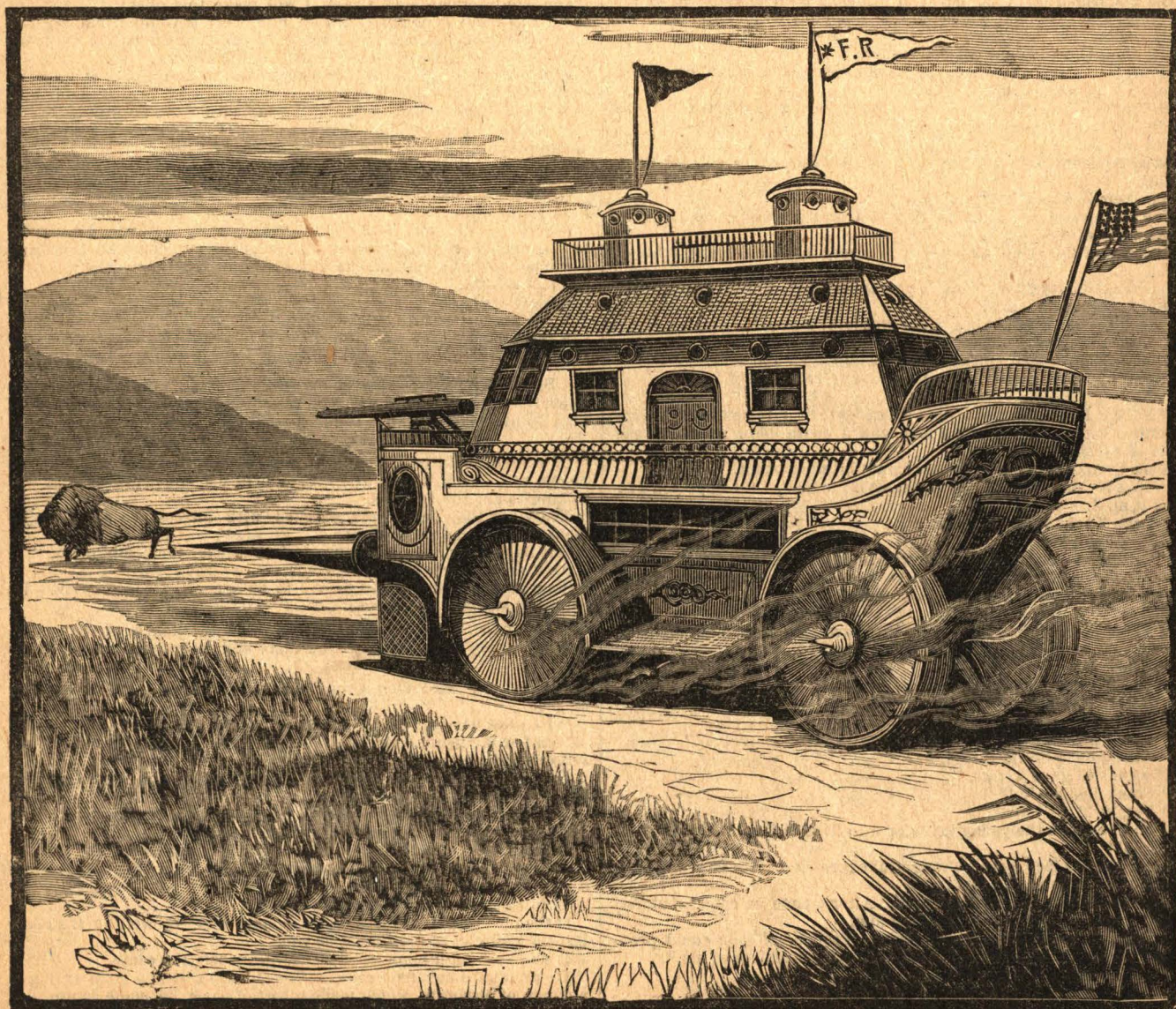
Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office, October 5, 1892.

No. 87. { **COMPLETE.** } FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 34 & 36 NORTH MOORE STREET, NEW YORK. { **PRICE** } **Vol. IV.**
New York, August 10, 1894. { **5 CENTS.** }

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1894, by FRANK TOUSEY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

Frank Reade, Jr.'s **CLIPPER OF THE PRAIRIE; or,** Fighting the Apaches in the Far Southwest.

By "NONAME."



The subscription Price of the FRANK READE LIBRARY by the year is \$2.50; \$1.25 per six months, post-paid. Address FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 34 and 36 North Moore Street, New York. Box 2730.

Frank Reade, Jr.'s Clipper of the Prairie;

OR, FIGHTING THE APACHES IN THE FAR SOUTHWEST.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His New Electric Air-Ship the 'Eclipse,'" etc.

CHAPTER I. THE LOST TROOP.

A STARTLING report from Gen. Crook had reached Washington. It had come by courier from the Magallon range of mountains in the heart of Arizona, where the U. S. troops had been fighting the hostile Apaches for many weeks.

A certain body of cavalry, Troop H, had disappeared in a most mysterious manner, and as effectually as if wiped from the face of the earth forever.

The fastnesses of that mighty region could well conceal many a terrible deed which might never come to light.

Troop H, commanded by brave Lieut. Hinks, had ridden into the hills and had never returned.

Old plainsmen said that they had probably been annihilated by the Apaches, and that their bodies would some day be found in some remote region.

But Gen. Crook would not believe this.

He was determined to find the actual remains of Hinks' command before accepting the fact.

So scouts were dispatched in all directions, and every effort was made to learn the fate of Troop H.

But in vain.

Stray Apaches were captured and almost tortured to compel them to talk.

But their lips remained sealed.

The disappearance of Troop H was a mystery which no ordinary effort could ever solve.

Satisfied of this, Gen. Crook was in a very much distracted state of mind.

In his extremity Allen Vane, a young sergeant, walked into his tent one day and saluted him.

"Gen. Crook, I would beg a few words with you."

"Sergeant Vane, I salute you. What is your errand?"

The sergeant seated himself upon a camp stool and said:

"You have not as yet learned the fate of Troop H?"

"No."

"I think I can give you a plan whereby their fate can be safely ascertained without the loss of a man and a death blow given to the band of Alchise."

Gen. Crook looked at the subordinate in amazement.

"That is an extraordinary statement!" he said. "I hope you can back it up."

"I can!" said Vane, confidently.

"May I ask how?"

"Certainly. In the first place we can hardly hope to ferret out the band of Alchise the chief, under a year or more, so strongly intrenched are they in these hills. Is not that so?"

"It is."

"Your theory is that Hinks and his brave men are somewhere completely environed in the Magallen Mountains?"

"Exactly!"

"There is one man in this country who can give you the necessary aid to ferret them out."

Gen. Crook was impatient.

"Well," he said, testily, "who is that talented individual?"

"His name is Frank Reade, Jr."

The general gave a start.

"Frank Reade, Jr.!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Do you mean the young inventor who lives in Readestown?"

"I do!"

The general's face wore a thoughtful expression. He was buried in thought for some moments.

Then he arose and paced the tent. After a time he confronted Sergeant Vane, who had been watching him.

"Vane, yours is a happy thought. Probably Reade could penetrate the hills safely in one of those wonderful machines of his."

"I know that he can, sir."

"Is he a friend of yours?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he at present?"

"At home in Readestown; I received a letter from him yesterday. Several days ago I wrote him telling him of Hinks' mysterious disappearance. He at once wrote me right back. Here is his letter."

Vane placed the epistle in Gen. Crook's hands. The latter read it eagerly:

"DEAR VANE—Your description of life in the Magallon district and of the mysterious fate of Troop H has greatly interested me.

"I am looking for a new field of adventure. I have just finished my Electric Clipper and propose to take an adventurous trip in her to some remote part of the world.

"Now I do not know that the plan would meet with approval, but if you will interview Gen. Crook, I will make this offer:

"I will come to Arizona with my new Electric Clipper and my two men, Barney and Pomp, and I will agree to learn the fate of the troop without any expense of men or money and little risk.

"The Clipper is intended for safe travel in a barbarous country and can stand off the attack of many hundred well armed men with ease. On a level plain the machine can beat a railroad train.

"Please to convey this offer to Gen. Crook and wire me. I will make preparations to come on at once if agreeable."

"With best regards,

FRANK READE, JR."

Gen. Crook handed the letter back to Vane and there was an eager light in his eyes.

"Sergeant," he said, excitedly. "You may at once send a courier to Tucson. Wire Frank Reade, Jr., from there to come at once, and I will endeavor to see that the United States Government pays him a suitable reward."

"Very well, sir!"

Vane left the tent quickly.

A few moments later an armed scout left camp with dispatches for Tucson. Several days passed before an answer came. Thus it read:

"SERGEANT VANE:—Convey my compliments to Gen. Crook. The Clipper is already aboard a special train for El Paso. From there I shall go overland and hope to reach you in ten days.

Yours truly,

FRANK READE, JR.

Of course no little excitement was created in camp when it was known that Frank Reade, Jr., with one of his famous inventions was coming to aid the soldiers.

Every day the horizon was watched with interest to see if the famous Clipper was yet in sight.

One day a cloud of dust was seen far out over the sandy plain.

As it drew nearer a horseman was seen swiftly riding.

Soon he was in camp and proved to be a courier from Tucson. He carried a message as follows:

"SERGEANT VANE,—I shall be in Tucson the tenth of the month. Would be very happy to meet you there and secure your guidance.

"FRANK READE, JR."

"Of course," said Gen. Crook, promptly, "take a guard and go, sergeant."

"I do not need a guard!" replied the sergeant. "I will go alone."

So a few moments later, equipped for the long and weary ride the sergeant left the camp.

He set out across the plain, thinly studded with mesquite clumps, and many varieties of cactus.

His mustang pony took a steady swinging lope, and reeled off mile after mile with the precision of a machine.

It was a long ride to Tucson, and a perilous one as well.

At any moment the traveler was in great danger of running across a prowling band of Apaches.

Then he must either elude them or fight.

If the latter, the chances were against him, as well as the odds. But the gauntlet of peril must be run.

It had been high noon when the sergeant left the camp.

He rode until darkness came. Then by the side of a little spring in a clump of mesquite, which made a sort of oasis, he made camp.

He hobbled his mustang, and turned it loose to graze. Then he unrolled his blanket and made a bed under a branch of Spanish bayonet. He made a lunch upon some strips of dried buffalo meat and some biscuits, carried in his saddle bags.

The sergeant slept soundly until the sun was high again. Then he awoke slowly, and with a curious feeling of impending danger. He opened his eyes.

And before he moved a finger a sound constrained him to remain motionless in his present position.

It was the sound of voices and from the guttural tones he knew that they belonged to Apaches.

Peering through the foliage he saw a thrilling sight. Seated about the bubbling spring and partaking of its cooling waters were fully a score of Apache fiends.

He was completely surrounded. The horror of the situation was upon him.

The movement of a finger, the slightest sound would be apt to betray his presence to them.

This meant death.

The emotions of the young sergeant can hardly be imagined. He lay motionless and watched the foe.

It seemed an eternity to him ere they made any change of position. Then he saw their ponies tethered near. The chief was a tall powerful savage with a cruel face.

Vane recognized him.

"Alchise!" he muttered.

This was a scouting party of the famous Alchise band no doubt. They had made a temporary visit to the spring.

The sergeant could only hope that they would continue on without discovering him. This was his only hope of escape.

And fortune sided with him.

They soon showed signs of this purpose. They began to mount.

And now Vane beheld the sight which nigh froze the blood in his veins and held his senses enthralled.

Among the ponies was one upon which sat a young white girl, whose wondrously beautiful face was pallid and drawn with awful horror.

She was a captive in the power of the cruel chief Alchise. The chivalrous young sergeant at that moment came near precipitating matters and bringing death down upon him.

CHAPTER II.

THE CLIPPER OF THE PRAIRIE.

"My God!" Vane had thoughtlessly gasped; "that is awful! It must not be!"

Fortunately the Apaches were making so much noise themselves that he was not heard.

Then a sense of the folly of attempting single-handed to rescue the fair captive dawned upon Vane.

"No use," he reflected; "I should be instantly killed. I must not be rash if I would save her."

Vane had been long enough in service to be quite familiar with the ways of scouts.

He forgot all about his appointment with Frank Reade, Jr., in Tucson.

It could not be of as much importance. He must not think of anything else but the saving of this young girl.

He was shrewd enough to remain quiet where he was until the savages took their departure.

Then, when the coast was clear, he leaped up.

"Now to trail them!" he whispered.

This would be no light task.

The Apaches were a dangerous crew to trail. Every few miles a rear guard was left in ambush to guard against trailers.

It was fortunate that Vane was possessed of this knowledge.

Else he would have fallen a victim to a trap.

Day and night for three days he followed the rascally crew. They were now at the very base of the Magellan Mountains when a thrilling thing occurred.

The Apaches were camping just at nightfall in the verge of some chaparral. Vane had succeeded in penetrating almost in their rear.

"To-night," he muttered, "I must try and make the rescue."

But even as the words escaped his lips a dark form sprang up in his path.

A terrific yell went up on the air and the sergeant was in the clutches of an Apache savage.

Vane fought like a demon, and burst out of the chaparral. He tried to reach his pony tethered near.

But half a dozen of the foe were upon him like tigers.

That moment would have been his last but for an incident.

Suddenly there was a mighty muffled rumbling like thunder.

Through the sage brush burst a leviathan object, and the crack of rifles was heard and three of Vane's assailants fell dead.

The other fled, and the young sergeant stood astonished gazing at the object which had been his rescue.

It was a vehicle of strange and wonderful make. It had come to a standstill but a few feet away, and even as the sergeant stared at it, a voice cried:

"Hello! Why, if it isn't Vane himself. Hello, old friend!"

"Frank Reade, Jr.," gasped Vane, as a wave of comprehension burst over him, "of all things. Well, this is indeed a surprise!"

The famous Electric Clipper was full before Vane's gaze.

A door opened in the vehicle and a tall, handsome man leaped out.

He gripped hands with Vane.

"Vane, I am glad to see you," said Frank, heartily.

"And I am more than glad to see you!" replied the sergeant.

"You were not on hand at Tucson so I came right along."

"That was right!" cried the young sergeant. "I was delayed. An incident on the way—oh, it was terrible!"

Frank Reade, Jr., gave a quick start as he saw the agonized expression upon Vane's face.

"What is wrong?" he asked, sharply. "What has happened?"

Then Vane told his story of the incidents at the spring that morning. Frank listened with deepest interest.

"Great heavens! that is, indeed, terrible!" he declared, excitedly. "Of course she must be rescued. Come aboard and we shall give chase at once!"

"But my pony—"

"You may leave him here and return for him later."

Vane was eager enough to if possible effect the rescue of the captive maiden. So he quickly accepted the offer.

But right here let us take a look at the Prairie Clipper, Frank Reade, Jr.'s, latest invention.

It was indeed a wonderful affair.

Its shape was that of a huge car upon four wheels of steel with grooved tires of hardest rubber.

The body was long and shaped at the rear, not unlike the stern of a schooner. This was of thinly rolled plates of steel able to resist a rifle ball.

There was a large section or window of glass amidships which was protected by a netting of steel. A window forward, and one behind was provided for in the same manner.

Forward was also a long steel ram with a keen blade. On the prow above rested a light steel gun, which threw a dynamite projectile with ease a mile, being worked upon the pneumatic principle.

This is a meagre description of the main body of the Clipper.

But above this was built a long cabin extending from bow to stern of the machine.

This was made of plates of steel, and in it were windows and a door leading out upon a narrow platform along which ran a guard rail.

Above was a row of dead eye windows and yet above this was an upper cabin protected by a steel netting impervious to a rifle ball.

Tip-top of all were two small domes, or conning towers, with dead eye windows. There was also an upper deck, with a hand rail about it.

Forward on this deck was the pilot-house, and above it a searchlight of mighty power.

This completes the external description of the machine.

Internally it was a wonder. Upon entering the main cabin a daintily furnished saloon was seen.

Of course it was small, but exquisite, nevertheless. Two more compartments contained the sleeping berths forward, and the cook room aft.

Then below, in the main body of the vehicle, was the dynamo, and all the delicate electric machinery which made the Clipper go.

This was all very wonderful to look at. By means of this machinery the Clipper could attain terrific speed. In the pilot-house, forward, was the steering gear, or a wheel, which turned the forward axle, and directed the course of the machine.

Besides Frank Reade, Jr., the occupants of the Clipper were Barney and Pomp an Irishman and a negro.

Both were genial and comical souls and as true as steel to their employer.

They greeted Sergeant Vane warmly as he sprang aboard the Clipper.

"I'm glad to see yo', sah," declared Pomp, with a comical grin.

"Begorra, we loked fer yez in Tucson," declared Barney.

"I was unable to meet you there," and Vane described why.

The explanation was satisfactory. Barney and Pomp were instantly vastly interested in the affair.

Meanwhile Frank Reade, Jr., had turned the course of the Clipper, and was thundering in pursuit of the Apaches.

It was a hot run, but the savages were too near the hills to be captured.

They managed to dodge into a canyon and all escaped. A futile search was made for them.

The disappointment of Vane could not be expressed in words.

"Well, that is too bad," he declared; "fate is against us!"

"Don't despair," said Frank with twinkling eyes. "We'll overtake them yet."

The canyon trail was too rough for the machine to travel over.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was not to be so easily defeated. He turned the Clipper down the valley and sought for another means of entrance to the hills.

Not two miles below another canyon was found.

Into this the young inventor sent the Clipper. It was wide and had a floor as smooth as could be.

Over this the machine bowled in a lively fashion.

Between mighty walls of smoothest rock the Clipper ran for some miles.

Then suddenly a remarkable scene burst into view.

Before them lay a mighty plain environed by high mountains. Its surface was as smooth as a floor and no living green thing grew upon it.

"Golly!" cried Pomp, excitedly, as this scene burst into view, "am not dis a berry wonderful ting!"

"Begorra, it's quare enuff!" agreed Barney. "There's divil a thing cud live fer shure!"

"A Valley of Desolation!" cried Vane. "I have heard of the existence of this place. It is believed to have once been the bed of a mountain lake."

"Certainly a remarkable freak of nature," agreed Frank Reade, Jr. "But I do not see anything of the Apaches."

"Yet they must have crossed this plain. All the canyons lead to it."

"Have you any idea as to the exact location of the stronghold or rancheria of the Chief Alchise?" asked Frank.

"But a vague idea. Do you see yonder flat-topped mountain?"

"Yes."

"It seems to be the highest hereabouts. Now it is my idea that somewhere about there is some fastness. Troop H, if alive, are still holding the Apaches at bay."

"Then your theory is that they are besieged?"

"Yes."

Frank Reade, Jr., was thoughtful.

"There are many ways in which the troop could disappear, and it is possible that it is still in existence," he said after awhile. "Is not this Gen. Crook's theory?"

"It is," replied Sergeant Vane.

"We will then endeavor to learn as quickly as possible how much of truth there may be in the premise," said Frank. "It will save time to combine the two expeditions, the rescue of the captive maiden and the finding and relief of Troop H."

Vane looked dubious.

"But—" he began.

"Well, what?"

"I suppose I ought to report to Gen. Crook before attempting any move of the sort."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when a startling sound was heard in their rear. Frank turned quickly.

"I am afraid you will not be able to report very soon," he said.

All eyes were turned back down the canyon and a thrilling sight it was which they beheld.

There, far up on the canyon walls, were visible a myriad of forms.

Down through the air were hurtling mighty boulders which fell with a terrific crash upon the canyon floor.

They were Apaches engaged in an attempt to, if possible, fill up the canyon and block an outward passage.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE VALLEY.

THIS astounding fact was at once potent to Frank Reade, Jr.

He turned to Vane.

"Apaches!"

"You are right," said the startled sergeant.

"They are trying to entrap us. They do not mean that we shall go back through that delfe."

This was a certain fact. Not a little excitement was created.

Barney and Pomp had seized their rifles and rushed out on the forward platform.

"Golly! jes' gib dis chile a bead on dem rapscaillions!" cried Pomp. "I'se gwine to fix dem berry quick!"

"Begorra, I'll shoot the first one," cried Barney, "I'll bet yez a foine cigar!"

"I'll go yo', chile!" bantered Pomp. "Yo' cudn't hit a big balloon!"

The two were ever fond of joking each other in a friendly way.

But at that distance it was hard to get an accurate line upon the savages.

They fired, however, several times. The result of their shots could not be seen.

Vane was somewhat worried.

"What shall I do?" he exclaimed nervously. "It don't look as if I should be able to report to Gen. Crook as soon as he expected. I suppose I was disobeying orders to come here in quest of the captive girl."

"Gen. Crook will never blame you for that!" declared Frank. "It was an act of common humanity!"

However, there was no way but to make the best of the situation, and become resigned to fate.

So Vane joined Barney and Pomp in their attack upon the savages. Frank ran the Clipper up to nearer range, taking care to keep out of reach of the boulders.

The bullets now began to tell.

But the Apaches also answered the fire and it became necessary for the white men to seek refuge in the cabin.

They used loop-holes however, to advantage and for some moments kept up a hot fire.

The bullets of the Apaches rattled harmlessly off the steel sheathing of the machine.

But the savages did not for a moment abate their work of throwing the boulders over the cliff.

The rifle bullets had no effect upon them. Seeing this, Frank muttered:

"Never mind! I'll fix them."

He went forward to the electric gun and trained it upward to bear upon that part of the cliff.

Then he placed a projectile in the breech and connected the lanyard with an electric wire.

Pressing a small button the result was something terrific.

There was a recoil, a hissing sound, and then from the cliff above there arose a volcano like burst of thunder.

The bodies of Apaches were hurled high in the air, together with tons of loose earth and rock.

The projectile had struck fairly in their midst and with fearful effect. A panic was created among them.

All fled incontinently. The pass was clear of them, but so many boulders had choked it.

The Clipper could not hope to make its exit from the Valley of Desolation so long as these boulders obstructed the way.

Here was a predicament.

Vane was most uneasy, but Frank Reade, Jr., was cool and collected.

"No use in fooling with them any further!" he declared. "We must if possible find Alchise and his band, and rescue the captive maiden."

"By all means!" cried Vane. "I fear we may be too late!"

"We will not think of that," said Frank, with determination.

The Clipper was sent flying over the hard, gravelly surface of the valley. Along the base of the mountain wall it ran.

Frank was looking for the mouth of the canyon which Alchise and his band had entered.

It was possible, as he well knew, that the savages were yet in the canyon. If so they could be ambushed.

So when the mouth of the canyon was reached the Clipper was brought to a stop.

Frank stepped out on the platform.

"I am going to look for the trail," he said. "If it is not here they have not yet come along."

If they had not the chance of rescuing the captive would be good. But Frank hardly dared hope.

However, he leaped lightly down to the ground and began to search for the trail. He easily found it.

Alchise had reached the valley before them and had crossed it. The trail was plainly visible.

This was a disappointment to Frank, but he at once prepared to pursue.

The Clipper was sent across the valley at full speed.

It was easy enough to follow the trail, which was very plain in the gravel, the indentations of the horses' hoofs showing quite well.

As they neared the opposite mountain range Barney, who was at the steering wheel, cried:

"Be jabbers, Misther Frank, an' there be the omadhouns jist cloimbing ther cliff yender!"

This was true enough.

Up a tortuous and narrow path, which led up the mountain wall, the body of Apaches were seen.

At that distance they were much out of range.

But Frank went forward and trained the dynamite gun.

A projectile was sent toward them. It struck the cliff just below them, and blew tons of rock from the ledge.

This caused the Apaches to hustle. They struck up the path at a lively pace.

But Frank did not fire again, for he was afraid the girl captive might be struck.

But the Clipper was sent forward at terrific speed.

By the time the mountain's base was reached, however, the savages were out of sight.

They had reached a point far above, where from behind a high parapet they suddenly opened fire upon the mysterious "fire carriage" which was pursuing them, and which was such an object of wonderment and terror to them.

And now the pursuers were confronted with a startling and most unwelcome condition of affairs.

The machine could not climb the steep trail. Pursuit therefore was brought to a stop.

Here was a quandary.

"It looks as if we are badly stuck," said Sergeant Vane.

"Indeed, you are right," agreed Frank, "they have a little the best of us just now."

"I have a plan."

"What is it?"

"Bring up a company of our cavalry! They can go into these hills and drive the foe out into the open! You would then have them at your mercy with your electric gun."

Frank saw the logic of this.

"Good enough!" he declared, "but how will you be able to get word to Gen. Crook?"

Here was a puzzler.

Of course it would be easy enough to find the way to camp with the Clipper, but it was on the other hand practically surrendering the contest to go away and leave the besieged Indians now.

To send a courier was not easy, for there was no courier other than Vane and he had no horse.

It would be almost fatal folly to attempt the feat on foot.

All these things were presented to the rescuers, and all were bound to admit that the problem was a queer one. How should it be solved?

Alchise and his gang kept up an incessant fire upon the Clipper.

Of course no great harm was done, as the bullets rattled off like water from the back of a duck.

But at the same time the savages had the advantage. At least for the time being.

But a discovery was quickly made which completely changed the complexion of affairs.

It was made after changing the position of the machine so that a better view of the mountain could be had.

It was then seen that there was a good reason for Alchise remaining in his present protected position.

Before he could leave it he must cross a wide and exposed part of the cliff.

This would expose him to the fire of his foes and be fatal. The Apache chief did not dare do this.

It was a joyful and gratifying discovery to the besiegers.

"Hurrah!" cried Frank Reade, Jr. "We have the best of them all around. It is they who are lame!"

"They are waiting for darkness," cried Sergeant Vane.

"That will do them no good!" said Frank. "We can throw the search-light upon the wall and they will attempt to leave at their peril."

"By Jove! we have them," said Vane, thrillingly. "We can bring them to terms, perhaps force them to surrender."

"At least we can starve them awhile!" declared Frank.

With the game thus apparently in their hands the voyagers on the Clipper prepared to await calmly the certain coming of victory which seemed inevitable.

But Alchise the wily Apache chief was not idle.

Signal fires were blazing from the mountain side, that system of telegraph common to the Apache.

Before the day was spent, this was answered from the peaks surrounding the Valley of Desolation.

Vane saw and understood all.

"They're up to snuff!" he declared. "We shall have music shortly."

"Do you think they are calling for relief?" asked Frank.

"Yes!"

"How can it be given?"

"I don't know. It's more than likely, however, that you will see a horde of the savages in this valley very shortly now!"

"Do you mean to say that they will attack us in the open?"

"It is likely!"

"Very good!" said Frank, grimly. "I think that we can give them a battle."

Vane's prediction was very shortly proven true.

The Apaches were summoned by Alchise to attack the Clipper, and they came.

Not by strategic work, but boldly and openly, a most unusual thing for the Apache to do.

In various parts of the valley now parties of horsemen could be seen. Their long lances and plumes were easily distinguishable.

All were mounted which was another unusual thing, for the Apache generally fights on foot.

Frank from the pilot-house watched the demonstration with deepest interest.

He saw the horde of savages gathering numbers every instant, and swelling in number to thousands.

It would seem as if such weight of numbers must surely overwhelm the defenders of the Clipper.

But Frank Reade, Jr., only smiled grimly, and said:

"This will be a hard day for them, depend on it!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE APACHES CORNERED.

THE Apaches were now in overwhelming force. From every part they concentrated in the Valley of Desolation.

The day was waning fast.

It seemed as if the purpose of the foe was to attack the Clipper under cover of darkness.

In this case they would doubtless have an advantage. But Frank Reade, Jr., was prepared for this.

He proceeded to offset this disadvantage in an ingenious and skillful manner.

He produced a small case of steel from his state-room, and opened it.

He took out a shirt of mail. Vane was astonished.

"Another invention?" he asked. "Is that impervious of bullets?"

"It is!" replied Frank. "Unless at very close range."

"Wonderful!"

Frank now drew forth a helmet, or hood of the same material, which fitted on over the head and shoulders.

Then next leggings of steel meshes, making a complete suit of armor. Thus equipped, he took a large coil of wire and some tools and stepped out on deck.

"What are you going to do, Frank?" asked Vane, curiously.

"You shall see," replied the young inventor. "I am going to post sentries to guard against a night attack."

And this was really Frank's purpose. He proceeded some one hundred yards from the machine and began to work.

The Apaches on the cliffs availed themselves of what they believed an excellent opportunity to kill their foe, and at once opened fire.

The bullets rattled against the steel armor, but did no harm.

The Apaches were puzzled. To them the young inventor at once became "great medicine," and possessed of a charmed life.

They could not divine what Frank was doing, for to them, at that distance, the wire was invisible.

But they made all the objection to his movements in their power, and their hideous yells filled the air.

Frank paid no heed to them but kept on about his work coolly.

He stretched a length of the wire in a half circle about the machine to guard against an attack from the plain.

The wire was fastened upon stakes about a foot from the ground so that anyone advancing through the grass would be sure to strike.

Then several connecting wires were run back to the machine and connected with the dynamos.

By pressing a button Frank could easily charge all the wires.

Woe to the luckless savage who should come in contact with them! It would be an unfortunate day for him.

Frank returned to the machine and was welcomed eagerly by the others who had divined his purpose.

"What a great scheme," cried Vane eagerly, "that will give the rascals a surprise to be sure."

"It will certainly surprise them," said Frank with a grim smile, "they will wonder what has struck them."

"Golly, I done fink dey am comin' right along," declared Pomp.

Indeed this was seen to be a fact.

The Apaches did not seem disposed to wait for darkness before making the attack.

They were massing from all quarters and now came sweeping down through the valley in three divisions.

Frank saw that a critical time had come.

But he was prepared for it.

He went forward and trained the electric gun upon the distant body of horsemen, taking the center as an objective mark.

Then he sent a dynamite projectile hurtling over the plain.

At the moment the foe were distant over half a mile.

But Frank's aim was true, and the projectile struck in their front rank. The effect was indescribable.

Horses and riders were thrown high in the air. Others were hurled right and left like puppets.

A mighty hole was blown in the ground, and the whole troop of savages scattered in wild confusion.

Again Frank trained the wonderful electric gun.

Again a projectile burst in the midst of the terrified body of Indians. A score of them were killed.

They broke and fled in wild confusion.

They were wholly unable to understand the nature of the terrific death balls hurled at them.

The wildest of terror seized them.

The Indian is not a fighter in the open. His tactics are ever those of strategy and treachery.

So the charge upon the Clipper was dispelled like mist before the sun. Those on board the machine cheered lustily over their victory.

Frank's face still wore the same grim smile.

"What did I tell you?" he said, coolly, as Vane gripped his hand. "I knew that I could drive them to a retreat."

"And so you did!" cried the young sergeant, excitedly. "It was a grand victory! I have all confidence in the ability of the Clipper to whip an army!"

"Not quite so bad as that," laughed Frank, "but I think we can give those fellows a good tug."

The entire Apache army now retired to a safe distance down the valley out of range of the dynamite gun.

There they remained quietly, and seemed to be holding some sort of a consultation.

Alchise and his men on the mountain side were evidently not a little disconcerted at the result of the conflict, for nothing was now heard from them.

They remained exceedingly quiet, not even venturing a shot at the machine.

It was evident that they had materially changed their tactics, and that it was their purpose to wait for the cover of darkness before beginning any new move.

Frank, however, was prepared for all this.

Vane had conceived the idea that the foes might escape from their mountain perch under cover of darkness.

But Frank laughed.

"We'll see about that!" he said, "they cannot come out of there without our seeing them."

Vane had forgotten the search-light, which as soon as darkness came on was turned full upon the mountain side.

This made it impossible for the savages to make an escape.

That they also realized this fact was made manifest by the savage yells which they now sent up.

The position of Alchise was now by no means a desirable or encouraging one.

It was evident that the wily chief realized this.

But the Apaches were not disposed to give up without a struggle. That they intended to attempt the passage of the cliff was soon made apparent.

Suddenly upon the narrow path there appeared a half dozen of the Indians. They were mounted and urged their ponies as rapidly as possible up the path.

"Bejabers they're going to thry it!" cried Barney, excitedly. "Shure yez oughter give it to 'em, Misher Frank!"

"Golly! jest wait till I gits a line on dem chaps!" cried Pomp.

"Yez'll niver do that before me, naygur!" cried Barney.

But both rifles exploded simultaneously. One of the dusky riders fell over the verge of the cliff.

His body and that of his pony went hurtling down into the depths below.

"Ki-yi!" screamed Pomp. "Wha' I tell yo', chile. I done hit my man an' yo' didn't hit nuffin!"

"Begorra, don't yez tell me that!" cried Barney, indignantly.

"Shure I hit that man meself!"

Pomp shook his woolly head.

"I jes' aimed fo' dat man mahse'f!" he cried.

"Be jabers an' so did I!"

"But yo' neber hit him."

"Don't yez tell me that, yez black misfit, or I'll baste ye!"

"Yo' amn't de size, honey!"

"Begorra, we'll see!"

Barney made a terrific swipe at Pomp. But the latter dodged it and struck back with all his might.

Then he lowered his woolly head like a battering ram and would have gone for Barney full tilt had it not been for a timely interference.

Frank Reade, Jr., came up and catching Pomp by the collar whirled him about.

"Hold on there!" he shouted, angrily, "this is no time for sky-larking!"

The two jokers subsided, but Pomp managed to whisper, hoarsely: "Neber yo' mind, I'ish, I'll cum squar' wid yo' fo' telling me dat I didn't hit dat ar Ingin. Yo' kin wait!"

"Begorra I'll wait!" retorted Barney. "Don't yez fergit it!"

But Frank was at the electric gun. He carefully trained it upon the mountain path just in the advance of the savages.

Then he pressed the electric button.

The dynamite projectile struck the path with a cannon-like roar.

The half dozen savages were hurled from it like puppets.

The air was full of flying fragments of rock, and Alchise and his men retreated in wild confusion to their covert.

To escape was not so very easy as it had seemed.

This terminated any attempt at escape that night.

But the savages in the valley had not been idle.

They had by no means abandoned their purpose to attack the Clipper again. Indeed, it was their firm intention.

Occasionally the searchlight was sent sweeping out over the valley, but nothing was seen of the savages.

However, they were there and acting in concert for an attack.

Down in the bunch grass they crouched, flat upon the ground, worming their way along like serpents.

Fully a thousand of them were thus making a line about the Clipper. It was their purpose to creep as close to the machine as possible.

Then in concert all would spring up and overwhelm the defenders of the Clipper.

The plan was all right from a strategical point of view. But there was a good chance for failure as the reader well knows.

The Apaches, however, were utterly unaware of the deadly pitfall set for them.

Those on board the Clipper had been under a long and severe, mental and physical strain.

It was decided that Frank and Vane should sleep until three o'clock, after which Barney and Pomp would turn in until morning.

"But at the least suspicion of attack!" cautioned Frank to Barney, "be sure to call me."

"All right!" replied the Celt. "I'll be sure to do that. Rest aisy upon that score, sar, an' may yez slape well."

CHAPTER V.

A PARLEY WITH ALCHISE.

FRANK and the young sergeant did sleep well.

Barney and Pomp kept faithful watch. By Frank's orders they occasionally searched the plain with the electric light.

But they failed at any time to see any of the foe.

If there they kept remarkably well out of sight.

The two jokers sat in the conning tower of the Clipper and amused themselves while watching by telling stories.

Both were excellent hands at this, and each tried to outvie the other.

Thus the hours passed until it was long past midnight.

"Begorra!" exclaimed Barney, consulting the chronometer, "shure it'll soon be toime to wake up Mither Frank an' the sergeant. Divil an Injun soign yit."

"Golly, don' yo' be sure we don' see one yit!" asseverated Pomp.

"Bejabers, an' it's little I'd keer," declared the Celt. "Shure, it's tood dead fer me around here."

"Mebbe yo' wud jes' like a scrap wif one ob dem Ingines, I'ish!"

"Yez kin jes' bet I would!"

"Den yo' jes' go right out dar on de plain an' whistle an' mebbe one ob dem will gib yo' a chaine!"

"Arrah, ther ain't an Ingin within a dozen miles of this machine in that direction, naygur!"

"Don' yo' be too sure!"

"Begorra, I know it!"

"Huh! wha' am dat?"

Both watchers leaped to their feet. There was a good reason for this.

Suddenly there was a swift, vivid gleam of light far out on the prairie, a terrific yell of agony, and for an instant they saw a dark, flying form outlined against the sky.

They stood for a moment nonplused. Then the truth dawned upon them.

"Golly fo' glory!" gasped Pomp; "I done fink I knows wha' dat means!"

"Begorra, there's Injins out there!" exclaimed Barney, excitedly.

"Shuahs you'se bo'n, chile!"

"Bejabers, the woire sthopped them!"

One of the prowling savages had really come in contact with the electric wire. This was the first victim.

But this incident was a revelation to Barney and Pomp.

They knew that there must be other savages out there on the plain, and at once they sprang to the search-light.

Turning the valve, they brought it to bear upon the plain.

A revelation was accorded them.

There, plainly visible creeping up like a legion of coyotes, were swarms of the red foe. With the turning of the search-light they sprang up with wild yells.

They started for the Clipper full tilt. It was an exciting moment.

"Call Mither Frank, quick!" yelled Barney. "Sure we're in fer a fight!"

Pomp pressed an electric alarm. But Frank and the sergeant were already aroused.

They were upon deck almost instantly, and just in time to witness a thrilling scene.

The front rank of the foe struck the heavily charged wire first. The result was thrilling.

They were lifted as if by a catapult and hurled in all directions.

Piled up in heaps, they yelled and struggled in terror and amazement. What mysterious power thus hurled them back they were unable to understand. But out of the vast force scarcely a dozen passed the deadly wire.

The shock was not sufficient to kill them, for Frank did not believe in wholesale slaughter.

But it gave them a stunning shock. It was as if some giant hand had lifted and hurled them back.

The sight was a wonderful and strange one to witness.

The young sergeant exclaimed:

"Frank, this is wonderful! You have revolutionized warfare!"

The young inventor laughed.

"Not quite," he said; "it makes a very good defense, though."

Meanwhile Barney and Pomp had been busy with their rifles.

At such short range they were able to do deadly work.

But they were not given the opportunity long.

Thoroughly disheartened, the savages fled incontinently.

Frank could have mowed them down by hundreds, and this was suggested by the sergeant.

But the young inventor said:

"No. I do not believe in wanton destruction of life. I believe that we shall convince the savages that we have the upper hand, and then we can bring them to terms."

"Yours may be the best plan!" agreed Vane. "We certainly have Alchise in a trap."

"That is it, and if he is wise he will very soon come down and offer to treat with us!"

"I hope he will!"

Frank's prediction proved true.

Daylight came at last. There were numbers of the Apaches slain upon the plain.

But not a living savage was in sight.

All was quiet on the cliff, and their presence might have been doubted, but for a signal fire.

But near the hour of noon a white flag was seen to appear over the rampart above. Frank stepped out upon the platform of the Clipper, and answered the signal by holding up his hands.

Then down the face of the cliff slid a little Apache.

He came on until he stood upon the plain at the base of the cliff.

A few more reassuring signals and he advanced toward the Clipper. When within speaking distance Frank addressed him in Mexican:

"Well, my red friend, what will you have?"

The Apache regarded Frank steadily for a moment, and then replied:

"The great chief Alchise asks for a council with you. He will meet you at the foot of the cliff."

"Tell him I will meet him there!" said Frank.

The messenger turned and bounded away like an arrow.

A few moments later Alchise himself and two of his chiefs were seen coming down the path.

Frank said to Vane:

"Come with me!"

They left the Clipper and set out to meet the Apaches.

Alchise halted just in the shadow of a clump of mesquite. He folded his arms and maintained a dignified attitude as the two white men came up.

He bowed stiffly in answer to Frank's salutation. One of his chiefs acted as interpreter.

"Alchise," said Frank, sternly, "you are doing wrong in making war upon the white man. You know that well."

This was interpreted to the famous chief. His lip curled in scorn.

"Why does the Apache make war upon his white brother?" he cried, scornfully. "Shall he ask that question? Who shall pay for the cornfields taken from our people on the Gila? Who forced us to take abode in the fever regions of the San Carlos, where our braves sicken and die and our squaws mourn? Who shall defend the Apache but himself?"

In a measure Frank and Vane both knew that the Indian was right.

It is a stain upon the honor of this country that the greed for gain

of a few unscrupulous individuals should have led to the appropriation of those lands which were really the property of the Apache, and where he was happy and content.

But we will indulge in no homily upon the government's Indian policy, or the injustice therefrom accruing.

"You have been dealt wrongly with beyond doubt," said Frank, in a kindly tone; "but you are making war upon those people who are entirely innocent of wronging you. You cannot hope to gain justice in that way."

"My white brother speaks soft words!" replied Alchise. "So have all before him done. But he cannot blind the Apache again. We will die in our rights."

"That is a brave resolution," replied Frank, "but how futile. It is better to be at peace with the white man who is more powerful than you."

"Why shall you speak of peace?" cried Alchise, angrily, "look upon my people. They are driven from their hunting grounds. The buffalo has passed into the happy hunting grounds and the Indian no longer has his flesh or his skin for his comfort. The white man has done this. There are no hunting grounds for the Indian now. He too must pass to the great beyond with the buffalo!"

There was something like a vein of sadness in the chief's voice. A shadow passed over his strong face.

Frank hardly knew how to meet these arguments of the chief.

"Then you will not talk of peace?" he asked, finally.

Alchise's face assumed shrewdness.

"The white man and his fire wagon has the Apache in a bad place!" he said. "We can fight, but my braves would all die. What shall we give the white man to depart and leave us in peace?"

Frank quickly made answer.

"Two things!" he said, "they are not difficult to grant."

"A thousand buffalo skins?" asked Alchise, eagerly, "they are yours."

"No!" replied Frank, steadily.

The chief scowled.

"I can give no more!" he said.

"Yes, you can!"

"Name your price!"

"You have in your power a young white girl, have you not?"

Alchise's eyes flashed.

"A white lily!" he said. "She will be a squaw for Alchise and gladden his tepee. It is spoken!"

"Never!" cried Vane, savagely, but Frank restrained him.

"You must deliver the white lily up to us!" he said, sternly. "She must be given back to her people. Then you must tell me what of the soldiers who are lost in the hills?"

Alchise drew himself up.

"My white brother asks for that which Alchise will never give," he said. "I have spoken; it is ended."

And he unceremoniously turned his back and walked away. The conference was ended.

Frank and Vane went back to the Clipper.

The latter was much excited.

"The dirty dog!" he gritted. "I had all I could do to keep my hands off him! He ought to be hung!"

"Tut, tut!" said Frank. "You are too hasty, Vane!"

"I mean every word of it. To think that he should hold that innocent young girl captive! I tell you she is an angel in the hands of fiends."

Frank looked sharply at Vane.

"Upon my word, I believe you are smitten!" he said. "And you never even spoke with her."

Vane blushed redly.

"I am interested deeply," he replied. "I shall always champion the weaker sex."

"A worthy sentiment," agreed Frank. "But come, let us think of some sort of a plan to rout those rascals out of there in quick order."

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMPANY OF CAVALRY.

"I THINK there should be no time lost," declared Vane, eagerly. "What if they should do her harm?"

"We must keep them busy," said Frank; "but—look here, Vane!"

"Well?"

"You don't even know the name of this female nor where she is from?"

"No."

"Then why are you so interested?"

"To tell the truth I don't know," replied the young sergeant. "It is a sort of instinct as it were."

Frank laughed.

"Perhaps after you have made a closer acquaintance the illusion will be dispelled," he said.

"It is possible," agreed Vane, "but I don't believe it."

In vain the Clipper's party tried to devise some plan for the rescue of the captive girl.

It was a problem.

Finally Vane said:

"I have an idea."

All looked at him.

"What is it?"

"To-night, under cover of darkness, I will make an effort to get up there to the Indian camp, and perhaps I shall find a way to rescue her."

But Frank Reade, Jr., said:

"No, sir! I shall veto that."

Vane looked astonished.

"Why?" he asked.

"It is inexpedient."

"I take my own risk."

"That matters not. I will not see you go to death in such a manner."

"That is not likely. I am quite capable of taking care of myself." But Frank would not be convinced.

Thus the day passed.

Night came, and the horizon was ablaze with signal fires.

"They are up to some new devilry," declared the sergeant.

"You will see."

But no attack was made on the Clipper that night.

Morning came, and a peculiar state of affairs was revealed.

Apparently not an Apache was in the Valley of Desolation or the hills about.

Even the position occupied by Alchise seemed deserted. What did it all mean?

"They have given us the slip," said Vane, blankly.

"Impossible," declared Frank, in a mystified way. "Yet it don't seem as if any of them are about."

"Nor are they. I tell you they have given us the slip."

Frank went forward to the electric gun.

"Let's see if we can wake them up," he said.

He placed a projectile in the breech and elevated the gun.

Then he pressed a button.

The gun exploded, and the projectile struck a corner of the parapet far above. It had an appreciable effect.

The huge wall of the parapet was shattered, and the shelf of rock far above was exposed to view. Not an Apache was visible on it.

This was an astounding revelation.

"Gone!" gasped Frank. "What does that mean? How did they ever get away? Surely not by the path."

Certainly this seemed improbable enough. Yet, of course, it was possible.

An idea occurred to Vane.

"Maybe there is some way which we cannot perceive from here," he said. "By the formation of the mountain wall it looks to me as if there was a narrow cleft back of the shelf."

"There is," declared Frank, "but it can't be passable."

"It must, or else they have made it so."

"Possibly."

"There is only one way to decide!"

"And that—"

"Is to go up there!"

"I am ready to do that," said Frank.

"And I!"

"Barney and Pomp, you will look after things aboard the machine!"

"All right, sir!" cried Barney.

"Jes' yo' bet we will!" said Pomp.

"If you see that we are in a trap or ambushed, open fire on the foe!"

But there was little need of giving them this hint. They would certainly be on the alert.

So Frank and Vane prepared to leave the Clipper.

It was an adventurous mission, for there might be many of the foe yet there and in waiting for them.

But they were decided to take the chances and neither was the one to back out.

Armed to the teeth they left the Clipper.

Frank was dressed in his suit of mail. Thus they made their way up the steep ascent.

Soon they came upon the bridge trail and this made the ascent easier. Suddenly the crack of a rifle sounded just above them.

Frank Reade, Jr., experienced a shock and knew that the bullet had struck him. But his impervious coat of mail saved him.

It was fortunate that he had been selected for the target instead of Vane. The shot would have been fatal.

But the attempted killing did not go unavenged.

Vane had seen by the puff of smoke the quarter from which the bullet had come.

This was a clump of mesquite just above. Quick as a flash Vane fired into it.

There was an unearthly death yell and up into view leaped a half naked savage.

He fell down into the trail a corpse, almost at their feet.

"Look out for others, Frank!" cried Vane, shrinking behind a boulder. "We may be entrapped."

But Frank did not seek cover.

He knew that he was safe anyway with his suit of mail, so he remained where he was scanning the cliff intently for sight of a foe.

But in this he was disappointed.

None appeared. This seemed the only one in the vicinity.

"Do you see any more, Frank?" asked Vane.

"No."

"He was a stray Indian."

"It seems so!"

Vane came out of his covert.

"Were you hit?"

"Yes."

"Of course it did not hurt you?"

"I felt the shock," said Frank, "but I am aware of no painful effect. Well, let us go ahead."
And this they did, keeping a sharp lookout. But they saw no more of the foe.

The shelf was safely reached. Here their convictions were proven true.

It was easily ascertained how the foe had made their escape.

There was a cleft in the wall which had been blocked by bowlders of granite. The savages had cleverly removed these and made a path over the mountain for both pony and man.

Long ere this they had doubtless crossed the range, and were beyond easy pursuit.

Frank Reade, Jr., was much discomfited. He looked his disgust.

"Well, they outwitted us in great shape!" he declared. "I am afraid we shall have trouble to catch them again!"

Vane hopelessly thrust his hands into his pockets, and strode back with Frank down the trail silently.

Not until they reached the Clipper did either speak.

Then Vane said:

"What are your plans, Frank?"

"I cannot say just now!"

"I would suggest one!"

"Well?"

"I will ride back to Gen. Cook, and report to him. Then we will send a body of cavalry into the hills, ahead of the Clipper, to drive the foe out!"

Frank was thoughtful a moment.

"Yours may be a good plan!" he said. "But——"

He did not finish the sentence. A startling sound came up the valley. It was the blast of a bugle.

Both men looked up in astonishment.

Up the valley in the verge of the hills came a troop of mounted men.

They were U. S. soldiers.

Vane gave a great cry.

"Captain Nicholas and his company!" he shouted. "Hurrah! Now we shall get word from Gen. Crook!"

The party of cavalymen dashed up to the spot.

Salutes were exchanged, and then each side explained their presence in the valley.

Captain Nicholas had been sent out on a skirmish tour through the region believed to be infested by Alchise's men.

They had experienced a slight contest with the Apaches in a canyon a few miles below.

They scattered the foe, and were on their heels when they heard the roar of the dynamite gun.

At once they started out to find out the cause of this terrific sound which was suggestive of artillery.

Vane's mind was now greatly relieved.

Captain Nicholas furnished a courier who took a message on his fleet pony and went back to Crook.

It was decided to camp upon the spot and await the courier's return.

He came in dusty and wearied long after midnight. His message was from Gen. Crook and read thus:

"DEAR VANE:—Glad that you are all right. Your course of procedure is excellent. Keep right on with Mr. Reade and his invention. We make a move into the hills to-day. You need not report again until I see you!"

CROOK."

Vane was ready to turn a somersault of joy so delighted was he.

"I tell you Gen. Crook is no crank," he declared, "he knows just how a man feels and what he wants to do."

"I think if we skirt the range to the southward, we shall meet Gen. Crook on the other side," declared Nicholas.

"Do you believe that?" said Frank.

"I do."

"And is it your opinion that we shall find the camp of Alchise in that manner?"

"It is. I believe that his retreat is upon the southwest spur of the Magallon."

"All right," said Frank resolutely. "We will test your sagacity in this matter."

So it was decided to go to the southwest spur of the range and enter by a deep canyon there.

Nicholas believed it possible to get in the foe's rear in this manner, and utterly rout his band.

"We will drive them directly into the hands of Crook in that manner!" he declared. "Also we will be able I think to learn the fate of Troop H."

The Clipper started out at a moderate rate of speed along the base of the range. The soldiers followed slowly.

The day was blistering hot, and man and beast suffered.

But after a time the lower end of the valley was reached, and here the Clipper climbed to a high plateau and her course was veered to the west.

They were now able to see the lower end of the great range of mountains. They were indeed in a rough part of the country.

Gradually the plateau was crossed, and the Clipper approached a mighty canyon which led as Nicholas declared to the other side of the range.

This would bring them right into the heart of the Apache country.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE POWER OF THE APACHES.

As the machine drew near the canyon nightfall came and a good spot was selected to camp.

This was near a little bubbling spring where man and beast slaked their thirst and were refreshed.

Hot as the climate of Arizona is with the going down of the sun comes the coolest and most delightful of air.

Camp was made on the verge of a chaparral and the evening meal was indulged in.

It had been a long and dusty journey and many of the soldiers were content to fall asleep at once.

But Nicholas caused sentries to be posted and took all the necessary measures to guard against an attack.

As yet not a sign of the Apaches had been seen.

But old scouts declared that this was an almost certain indication that they were about thicker than flies in sultry August.

"It is well to believe them in every thicket until you see them!" declared old Long Tom, a grizzled plainsman, "they're pretty cute critters."

Nobody was inclined to dispute this point, and all were inclined to vote it true enough, when suddenly a distant exchange of shots was heard and one of the pickets came in with a shattered arm.

Scouts were sent out and a startling report was brought back.

The scouts declared that the foe were all about in the deep grass thicker than gnats, and only waiting for darkness to make an attack.

At once there was general excitement in camp.

"We shall have a hot time before morning!" declared Lieut. Nicholas. "I have ordered my men to throw up breastworks!"

The soldiers were busily at work at this in the dusk.

But Frank said:

"No need of all that work. Let me get a chance at them!"

He stepped into the pilot-house and took the wheel. The Clipper shot out onto the prairie.

The soldiers cheered as Frank's purpose was seen. They paused in their work to see the result.

Barney took the wheel, with directions from Frank, who went forward to the electric gun.

It was the young inventor's purpose to make a wide circuit of the plain and charge down into the midst of the savages.

They might make a desperate stand, but this was just what Frank wanted.

He felt confident of scattering the whole gang with his gun. He placed a projectile in the breech.

Then he kept close watch of the plain.

Farther and farther from camp went the Clipper.

As yet no sign of the foe had been seen. But all of a sudden Barney cried:

"Luk out, Mither Frank. Bejabers, there's a raft av thim!"

Certainly there were visible just then a "raft" of the red foe.

It seemed as if the plain was carpeted for miles with their recumbent forms. The Clipper went tearing down into the midst of them.

Pomp and Vane opened fire with their Winchesters at short range.

Instantly up from the ground sprang the legion of dusky forms.

Their yells made the air hideous.

But the Clipper went down among them like an avenger. It was certain that there would have been terrific slaughter then but for an accident.

Dozens of the Apaches were run over, and some killed by the heavy wheels.

Frank had the gun all ready to concentrate upon the foe, but at that moment a catastrophe occurred.

Suddenly the machine seemed to rock and sway, gave a leap forward, and then came to a halt.

It was half upon its side, and the inmates of the cabin were jostled about like puppets.

"For Heaven's sake, what has happened?" cried Vane. "Have we lost a wheel?"

"No," replied Frank, who had now recovered himself. "It is quicksand."

"Quicksand!"

"Yes. This part of the country is infested with those treacherous holes."

But Vane knew well what he meant.

He knew that many a horse and rider had gone into quicksands never to be seen again.

As their surface was not unlike the remainder of the plain, it was not always easy to avoid getting into them.

The Clipper had indeed plunged into a quicksand.

This was a most unfortunate thing, and bid fair to bring a fatal ending to the expedition.

One end of the machine yet rested upon firm ground.

Frank Reade, Jr., was lightning-like in his realization of the exigencies of the moment and the necessity of prompt action.

The Apaches comprehended instantly their advantage, and proceeded to avail themselves of it.

They rushed forward with wild and savage yells, surrounding the disabled monster.

Frank saw that they would be quickly aboard unless something desperate was done at once.

The bow of the machine with the gun was buried in the sand. The electric gun could not be used.

Neither could the foe attack from that quarter without also getting into the slough.

Their only chance was at the stern of the Clipper.

"Back to the stern!" cried Frank. "Defend that or we are lost!"

But he had little need of this admonition. The others had seen it almost as quickly and were already there.

But they had only their repeaters.

Already two of the Apaches were at the rail of the Clipper.

"Whurroo!" cried Barney, "take that, ye omadhouns!"

Almost at point blank range he fired. One of the savages fell back with a yell. Pomp shot the other.

But there were a legion of others just behind them.

Frank and Vane, however, came up now and opened fire.

With this steady volley the attacking crew were for a moment held in check. But it could be seen that overpowering numbers must tell. Frank realized that something desperate must be done.

He could hardly afford to leave his post for even a moment, but he did so after reflection.

He rushed into the gun-room forward.

There were projectiles of dynamite in one of the racks. He took up one of them.

If it could be thrown among the foe he knew that dozens of them could be hurled into eternity.

But it was exceedingly heavy and he felt uncertain how far he could hurl it.

Unless it was thrown quite a distance beyond the stern of the machine, there was danger that it would injure the Clipper.

What was to be done?

Once more Frank examined the position of the gun. It could not be used.

Then he went to the pilot-house window and looked out. He beheld a most thrilling spectacle.

Far out over the plain the cavalry were seen engaged in deadly battle with the red foe.

As near as Frank could see, the latter seemed to have the best of it.

The young inventor drew a deep breath.

"It is weight of numbers!" he muttered. "Nicholas will be whipped and then we shall be overwhelmed. It looks bad!"

At that moment there came a terrific crash. One of the windows had been broken open.

Then Frank saw dusky forms upon the platform. They came rushing into the cabin.

At their head was Alchise. The famous cruel chief of the Apaches, with tomahawk swung aloft, shouted in Spanish:

"Surrender! You will live if you surrender!"

Frank Reade, Jr., felt like fighting to the bitter end.

But he could not help but see the folly of this, so he replied:

"All right, Alchise! We take you at your word!"

A yell of triumph went up from the Apaches. There was a light of exultation in the dark eyes of Alchise.

In a twinkling the Clipper was in the possession of the Apaches.

Frank and Vane and Barney and Pomp were made prisoners and put under guard.

The savages at once started to loot the Clipper. Frank had given his machine up for lost when Alchise, in tones of thunder, bade his men desist.

The prisoners were all huddled together in the forward cabin.

There they remained all that night. The appalling report came to them that Nicholas had been routed and driven into the hills defeated. No help was therefore to be expected from him.

Vane was pale, though calm.

"Frank, we are done for!" he said, dismally.

"Do you believe it?"

"How can I help it?"

"Perhaps he may set us free. Why did he not kill us on the spot?"

The sergeant smiled at this.

"You do not know Alchise!" he said; "he is the cruelist chief in the southwest. He intends to keep us for torture."

"Begorra, I wish we'd kept on wid our foightin' thin!" declared Barney.

"Golly! don't yo' s'pose we kin try fo' to escape?" asked Pomp.

But Frank shook his head.

"I fear it's all up with us!" he declared. "It was a terrible stroke of hard luck in getting into that quicksand!"

"Can't the machine be got out?" asked Vane.

"I don't see why!" said Frank. "The sand don't seem to be deep, else the Clipper would have sunk further. But even if it can, that will do us no good!"

This seemed true. Yet all kept up cheerful hearts.

It was one source of consolation that Alchise had discountenanced the looting of the Clipper.

What the chief's purpose was, was not just clear then, but it transpired somewhere later.

Morning came, and the prisoners looked out upon the plain to see it dotted with the camps of the Apaches.

"Whew!" exclaimed Vane, in amazement. "I think the whole Apache nation must have been called out. Evidently Alchise meant to make a sure thing of it."

"What do you estimate the number?" asked Frank.

"Fully three thousand."

"A large army."

"I should say so for four puny mortals like us to face."

"Yet," said Frank, with conviction, "if I had the use of the electric gun, I could blow them all into eternity!"

"Begorra, that's true," cried Barney.

Just at this moment the door of the cabin opened. All looked up and beheld Alchise, the cruel chief.

The Apache ruler entered, and there was a grim smile upon his brutish face.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALCHISE OUTWITTED.

INSTINCTIVELY Frank realized what this visit of Alchise meant.

He had come to offer a proposal, to name a condition. The expression of his face very plainly told this.

Frank folded his arms and waited for Alchise to speak.

"You are Senor Reade?" asked the chief in excellent Spanish.

"I am!" replied Frank.

"It is well!" replied Alchise with dignity. "I have come to make you an offer which will save your life."

Frank did not speak for a moment. He was doing a heap of thinking.

"Well," he said finally:

"My white brother has a wonderful fire carriage. It will make Alchise happy to have it for his own to ride in. With the big gun he can whip his foes."

Frank nodded quietly.

There had come to him a sudden deep and resolute purpose.

"Yes!" he said. "You would be a great chief with the fire wagon."

"But this one can never go again?" asked the chief. "Senor shall build me another like it."

"You are wrong!" said Frank. "This wagon can be of use again. All that is necessary is to draw it out of the mire!"

The face of Alchise lit up.

"It shall be done!" he said, positively. "Listen! Alchise holds the life of the white man in his hands. By his orders he could be tortured to death as many a prisoner has before. But—his life shall be spared upon a condition."

"I have not asked for quarter," said Frank, haughtily. "I do not sue for mercy."

"Neither would it be shown you if it were not that you can serve Alchise!" said the chief, savagely. "If you refuse, you shall die!"

"We are not afraid to die!"

The chief did not affect to notice, but continued:

"Alchise does not know how to make the fire wagon go. The white man shall teach him."

Frank saw the wily chief's game. It was his purpose to get a knowledge of the workings of the machine and then he would be possessed of a powerful factor in battle.

Moreover, it tickled his vanity to be able to own and ride in so luxurious a vehicle as the Clipper.

Frank saw all this.

At first the young inventor had decided not to accede to this request of the brute.

But at that instant an idea for escape flashed across his mind. At once he adopted a line of action.

Suddenly he said:

"Then you will spare our lives and give us our freedom, if I show you how the machine is operated and will turn it over to you?"

This was just what Alchise wanted, and he nodded his head eagerly.

"The white man speaks straight," he said. "Alchise gives his word."

"All right!" said Frank. "It is a go. Get one hundred of your men ready. I have work for them."

The young inventor accompanied the Apache chief to another part of the Clipper in quest of a cable.

This was found and fastened to the stern of the Clipper. Then the one hundred braves by Alchise's orders laid hold on the rope.

Frank had decided on no coup de main until after the machine had been pulled out of the mire.

The Clipper was quite deeply imbedded in the sand and of course required quite a severe strain.

But the power of one hundred men is no slight matter, and as the cable stretched and strained the machine began gradually to emerge from the sand.

It required fully an hour to pull her out on the hard prairie.

Then Frank put Barney and Pomp at work cleaning the forward axes and the electric gun.

In a short time the Clipper was in as good a condition as ever.

No material harm had been done beyond straining her slightly. Alchise was grimly exultant.

The Apache chief was sure that he had made a great conquest and a valuable acquisition.

The vanity of his nature was fully aroused and already he saw himself riding over the plains aboard the Clipper, master of the whole southwest.

His real object was to be possessed of such power as would enable him to easily annihilate any troop of soldiers sent against him.

He believed that he could do this with the Clipper.

He would compel Frank Reade, Jr., to teach him the mechanism of the machine.

Then he would kill his white prisoners so that nobody else should know the secret, and also that Frank should never produce a like machine.

This in spite of his promises to the young inventor, for the wily brute was treacherous to the core.

Frank, however, was ready for him.

The young inventor had guessed well enough what was on the chief's mind. He did not trust him.

"Well, Frank, it looks blue for us, don't it?" whispered Vane as they were working over the machinery.

"Not so very bad," said Frank hopefully.

"Do you think there is any chance for us?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I don't see any way but to make a break for it."

"There is a better plan," said Frank. "We can't do anything reckless, for they are all about us. But we'll work a little strategy on them."

"How?"

"You shall see."

Alchise had kept a cordon of braves all about the machine all the while. Now Frank beckoned to the chief and said:

"The carriage is all ready for you. Get aboard and you shall have a ride."

Alchise's face lit up triumphantly. He was about to board the Clipper, but a sudden thought checked him.

His brow clouded.

He motioned to a score of his braves who at once climbed aboard and stationed themselves along the outer platform.

Frank saw the chief's fears at once and smiled.

"You need have no fear, chief," he said, carelessly. "Are you afraid to trust yourself with me?"

"Ugh!" grunted Alchise; "let the white man start his fire carriage."

"But if you want me to learn you how to operate it," said Frank, "you must come with me and do just what I say!"

The chief looked at Frank inscrutably.

The expression of his face betrayed the fact that he was suspicious of a sharp game.

But Frank turned an honest gaze upon him.

"You are afraid," he said, "and yet your warriors outnumber us ten to one."

Alchise drew his hunting knife and went through the motion of scalping.

"White man die if he tries to deceive Alchise," he said.

"All right," said Frank impatiently, "are you ready to go?"

The chief held up his hand. Then he stepped out onto the platform.

A guttural order was given to his men there. Six of the braves entered the cabin.

Frank's heart sank.

He feared that his schemes were to be baffled and he was greatly disappointed. The action of Alchise was characteristic.

The six braves laid hands upon Vane and Barney and Pomp.

In a twinkling they were bound hand and foot. A gleam of satisfaction was in Alchise's bloody eyes.

He felt safe now.

He folded his arms, and, regarding Frank contemptuously, said:

"Alchise is ready!"

"But I protest!" said Frank, angrily. "You ought to trust me. You show ill-will and lack of faith in binding my friends!"

"Alchise has done it!" said the chief, loftily.

"Then undo it!"

The chief's eyes glittered. He placed a hand on his tomahawk.

"White man no talk more!" he declared, "or he shall die! Alchise speaks."

Frank said no more.

But he was resolved to pay the old scoundrel in good fashion.

He led the way into the pilot house.

Alchise stood at his shoulder as Frank pressed the motive lever. The Clipper rolled forward.

Out upon the plain she glided, going faster and faster.

The Indian encampment was quickly left behind.

Frank's resolution was already made.

He endeavored to explain to the treacherous chief the mechanism of the machinery. Alchise was of course not able to understand the electric problem.

He listened stolidly, and all the while Frank was putting the greatest possible distance between them and the Indian camp.

Frank believed the time for action had come.

He picked up a piece of wire and connected it with a steel rod which led out upon the platform where the score of Alchise's followers were clinging.

The chief did not understand what the young inventor's game was. Frank connected the wire with a switch. Then he turned to Alchise and said in the Mexican tongue:

"Great chief, you shall bring the fire carriage to a stop. Do you see these? Place your hands upon them and pull hard."

Unsuspectingly Alchise grasped the two wire coils with both hands. Frank saw that the circuit was complete and cried:

"Pull!"

Alchise obeyed, but at that moment Frank pressed a button. The current shot through the coils and Alchise's powerful form was convulsed in agony.

Yells of wrath, agony and hate pealed from his lips. He could not let go of the coils. He was trapped.

At the same moment Frank pressed another button which charged the steel platform outside.

The effect was thrilling.

The savages there were hurled about like puppets, and half of them in agony leaped overboard.

The others were half unconscious, and seizing a knife Frank sprang into the cabin.

"We've fooled them!" he shouted, triumphantly. "We are safe!"

Quick as a flash he cut the bonds of the prisoners.

So elated were they that a wild cheer went up.

"Hooray!" screamed Barney. "Shure, an' they'll niver fool Misther Frank. It's himself as kin' par'lyze the hull av thim."

"Golly, ain't I glad!" shouted Pomp. "I done fought ah had lost mah wool, fo' dead shuah."

But Frank and Vane had sprang out onto the platform where were the prostrate savages.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE UNDERGROUND RIVER.

ONE after another Frank and Vane tossed the stunned Apaches over the rail.

Their one purpose was to get rid of such troublesome cargo as speedily as possible. Yells from the rear showed that the Apaches from the camp had been following the machine on ponies and had comprehended the situation in a measure.

Alchise in the pilot-house had been yelling and raving like a madman.

Frank had turned off the platform current almost instantly, and before leaving the pilot-house. But he had not done so in the case of Alchise.

But now of a sudden there came a terrific crash from the pilot-house.

Then a body came flying like a stone from a catapult through the cabin.

It swept over the platform rail, knocking Frank and Vane down. As soon as they could regain their feet they were astonished to see the Apache chief sprinting like a deer across the plain toward his mounted followers.

Had either possessed a rifle he could have been brought down; but all had happened so suddenly that before they could act he was out of range.

"By Jupiter!" gasped Vane; "he has given us the slip, Frank."

"He has escaped!"

"Shall we pursue?"

"No," said Frank, decidedly; "let him go. We shall wind his career up very soon."

Barney now went into the pilot house to regulate the course of the machine.

It was an easy matter to distance the Apaches.

But this was not what Frank wished to do. He brought the Clipper around in a semi-circle.

By so doing he was able to get a line upon the red foe with the electric gun.

He did not hesitate to do so.

He drew a line on the Apaches, who were now in full retreat, and sent a projectile after them.

It exploded in their midst and made frightful havoc.

But still the scattered band kept on, with the terrible avenger thundering remorselessly at their heels.

"Give it to them!" cried Vance, "let us annihilate the whole gang!"

Indeed this would have been likely had they not been able to make the hills.

The Clipper was literally invincible on level ground. The Apaches seemed to realize this well.

They left scores of dead upon the plain, and it would likely be a long while before Alchise would recover from the humiliation of this defeat.

Truly, Frank Reade, Jr., had turned the tables upon them in a masterly manner.

All were fain to admit this. But now the question arose, as to the fate of the unknown white girl captive and that of Troop H.

As yet no clew whatever had been obtained.

It seemed that the only way to gain this information would be to invade the hills.

To do this with the Clipper did not seem to be an easy undertaking. But the machine now kept on over the southern spur of the Magallon, and as luck had it, found a passable canyon leading into the very heart of the range.

As all now began to foresee the most thrilling of developments, the excitement grew intense.

Every sign was investigated, every trail was studied, and at length Frank hit upon what he believed was the exact locality of Alchise's encampment.

There was a series of mountain peaks, which were jagged and bleak and encompassed a region which for canyons and caverns and uncanny retreats was unexcelled.

There flowed from it an underground river, and Vane professed a belief that the cavalry troop had become imprisoned, or lost in some labyrinth or cave of this region.

"I'll tell you what we'd better do," he said. "I will take one of the pontoon boats which you have aboard, Frank, and float down this underground river as far as is safe. Perhaps somewhere in the bowels of the earth I shall find our men!"

"I have a better plan!" said Frank.

"What?"

"Do you see those tall pines yonder?"

"Yes?"

"Well, I will cut down some of those, and we will build a huge raft."

The Clipper can in that way be floated in to the underground retreat."

This looked like a stupendous and not altogether feasible undertaking to the sergeant and he said so.

"You do not understand," said Frank. "This river may perhaps emerge into some hill bound plain or valley, where we will need the machine!"

"I would advise that we first reconnoiter the place!"

"Oh, certainly!"

"Perhaps you and I could take a pontoon and go down into the cavern and see what the chances are!"

"We will do that!"

In the cabin of the Clipper were stored some rubber portable canoes. One of these was now brought out.

The Clipper was brought to a stop on the river bank and the canoe was quickly equipped for the journey.

Then Frank and Vane entered it and paddled out into the current. Barney and Pomp had been instructed to remain closely aboard the Clipper and keep a sharp lookout for foes.

But there was little need of adjuring them to do this.

Both had had enough experience with the Apaches to be very sure to take no chances and be constantly on guard.

"If dey pulls de wool ober dis chile's eyes, dey's jes' got to get up in the mornin'," declared Pomp.

"Begorra, the fast mother's son av 'em as shows his head fernicst this place will git a bit av cold lead!" declared Barney.

So Frank felt easy as they left the Clipper and paddled on down the river.

Soon the canoe shot into the great cavern, and was caught in a powerful current which whirled it rapidly onward.

The roof the cavern varied in height, but still Frank estimated that it was sufficiently high to admit of the passage of the Clipper.

The young inventor felt sure that the stream would eventually emerge into some retreat among the hills.

And there he believed Alchise's men had their stronghold.

"At least we shall soon know," said Vane. "Hark! what is that?"

A distant roaring came plainly to their ears.

"A cataract!" exclaimed Vane.

"No," said Frank, whose ear was more practiced, "it is rapids. The water does not fall from a height."

This was reassuring.

"Will it be safe to shoot them?" asked Vane, cautiously.

"I don't see why. We will at least take the risk!" declared Frank. So the canoe shot on. Almost instantly they were in the rapids.

Down the terrible swift current the light craft shot like a race horse. It was as dark as Erebus, and Frank had no way of guiding the craft save by ear.

It was a mighty risk to take, for neither knew what was ahead. But there was the chance.

Frank and Vane clung to the sides of the canoe desperately. It seemed to them as if they had reached the end of the series of rapids when a catastrophe occurred.

Suddenly the canoe struck an obstacle.

It was doubtless a concealed rock. For a moment it trembled like an aspen, wavered, and then capsized.

"Look out!" shouted Frank. "We are over!"

But at that same instant his hands grasped a shelf of rock along the wall of the cavern.

He clung to it and drew himself up on it. He was above the seething waters and for the nonce safe.

But all was blackness about him.

He could not see the canoe or Vane, and knew not their fate. But instinctively he raised his voice and shouted:

"Hello, Vane! Are you safe?"

Again and again he shouted. But no answer came back to this.

"My God!" gasped Frank in a cold sweat of terror, "I fear he is dead!"

For some time he clung to the shelf of the rock hoping against fate to hear from Vane.

Time passed. How long he remained Frank never knew, but it finally occurred to him that he must examine his surroundings.

So he began to feel about him. To his surprise he found that he was upon a high bank of the stream, and the cavern here was broken into several passages which were dry.

They might have been once the course of mountain streams. But they were dry now, and he felt sure led to the open air.

Frank had waited fully a sufficient length of time to hear from Vane or the canoe.

There seemed little use in remaining any longer.

He could not possibly give Vane any assistance by doing this. So he decided to return if possible to the Clipper.

So he took one of the underground passages and kept on for some distance.

It was difficult groping one's way in the gloom.

But Frank paddled on until after a while he saw a light ahead. It was the mouth of the cave.

Much cheered he pushed ahead. The light grew plainer, and he saw distinctly the cavern's mouth.

At length he emerged into the light of day. The scene about him was certainly a peculiar one.

He was in what seemed a deep pit between steep pinnacles of rocks. Far above was the sky.

It was almost like looking up from the bottom of a well, and was only an example of the peculiar natural formation of the region.

Frank could not help but regard this with wonder and curiosity.

But what interested him the most was how he was to get out of this hole. It seemed like a hard problem.

Also he wondered much how far he was from the Clipper. What direction should he take?

He was wholly at sea in this wild region; but it was useless to waste time in this sort of reflection.

So he proceeded at once to climb up the steep sides as well as he could.

It was perilous work and several times he slipped back, but still he kept on steadily.

Soon he reached a cleft in the wall, through which he crept. To his surprise, he was upon the verge of a broad plateau.

He crossed this with some twenty minutes of quick walking. Then he stopped and listened.

He heard a distant shout. It guided him, and he pressed on until he reached what seemed like a natural stairway leading down to the base of a canyon wall.

Down these he went and threaded his way among some natural monoliths of stone. The waters of a river burst upon his view, and not fifty yards distant he saw the Clipper.

CHAPTER X.

A BRAVE RESCUE.

BUT what of young Sergeant Vane who had been swept on down the current of the resistless underground river?

He had not been fortunate enough to like Frank find a shelf of rock to cling to.

But he hung to the overturned canoe which supported him.

He remembered falling over the verge of a cataract and being under water for some moments.

Then he came up, gasped for breath and struck out to swim.

As he cleared the water from his eyes an astounding sight burst upon his vision.

He was floating in a large round pool. The high arches of a mighty cavern chamber were lit up with firelight.

The banks of the river were visible, and there he saw dusky forms moving about or seated around camp-fires.

The startling truth burst upon him.

Chance, fate, call it what you will, had brought him into the stronghold so long sought for of Alchise and his gang.

His heart beat like a trip-hammer, and a sense of peril was upon him.

For a moment he feared that he was seen by the red foe, but then he reflected that he was in deep shadow and could hardly be seen from the shore.

Vane kept himself afloat with little exertion for he was an expert swimmer. He watched the Indian encampment with the deepest of interest.

He even fancied that he could see the tall form of Alchise stalking around among them.

Then he thought of Frank Reade, Jr., and a chill of horror swept over him as it occurred to him that the young inventor was drowned.

He swam about in the pool looking for a possible trace of his friend.

But this was not to be found, and the appalling conviction dawned upon him that Frank was indeed lost.

He groaned with anguish and horror. Then he felt his strength waning and knew that it was necessary for him to get to the shore.

So he began to swim cautiously forward in the shadows.

He reached a secluded part of the bank and crawled dripping out. Sitting down upon the sands he wrung the water out of his clothes as well as he could.

He collected his scattered senses to the best of his ability and muttered:

"Poor Frank! It is sad to think that he is gone. But I will not believe it. I will keep a watch for him."

And this he proceeded to do, sitting there for a full hour and trying to penetrate the darkness of the pool.

At length he concluded that this was sheer folly.

"It is possible he came down ahead of me and is in some 'safe spot,'" he muttered. "I will believe him safe until I know to the contrary."

Then he decided to reconnoiter the Indian camp. This recalled to his mind the captive maiden.

His bosom thrilled. To rescue her should be his one purpose.

So forgetting all else he crept up the bank and hovered in the shadows.

He saw the scores of savages about the camp fires and also groups of squaws and troops of Indian children.

The cavern chamber covered many acres. Far beyond he saw a circle of daylight.

This was doubtless the means of ingress and egress. It was all a very wonderful sight.

Vane looked eagerly for some view of the fair captive.

His gaze was not unrewarded.

Suddenly he saw a number of squaws coming in his direction. They were walking leisurely, and between them he saw the captive maiden.

They were doubtless her keepers, and she was well guarded.

As they drew nearer, Vane saw in the firelight that her face was deadly pale. But such wondrous beauty he had never seen before.

He gazed upon her spellbound for some moments. Indeed, while in this state he came near exposing himself.

An Indian brave came stumbling along and almost fell over Vane. But luckily in the shadows he was not revealed.

It was a close call, and brought the young sergeant back to his senses. He drew back and now kept his eye out for peril.

The squaws who had the captive maiden in keeping were coming his way.

Soon they were very near. Then a startling thing happened. There was an outcry from the outer passage of the cavern. The clatter of ponies' hoofs and the shouting of warriors was heard.

A war party was just returning. In an instant all was excitement. The Indians, most of them, ran to meet the returned victors.

The captive maiden was now so near to Vane that he could almost touch her with his hand.

The squaws seemed intent upon the returning party. Vane seized a golden opportunity.

He leaned forward eagerly and laid a hand softly upon the white maiden's arm.

She gave a violent start, turned, and a half scream was upon her lips as she saw the pallid, upturned visage of Vane.

"Sh! For God's sake don't scream," he whispered, thrillingly. "Your life depends upon it."

"You!" she replied, in a whisper also, as soon as she recovered herself. "Who are you?"

"I am a friend and came to save you."

"Heaven be praised! But you are in awful peril!"

"I do not care for that. Have courage! I shall rescue you?"

Vane spoke so earnestly, so confidently, that the maiden's face was illuminated with a beautiful smile, which made her bewitching.

But at this juncture one of the squaws turned about with a guttural exclamation.

Vane dodged out of sight just in time to avoid betrayal.

Then the captive was led away. But the young sergeant's eyes never left her until she was led into a tepee, which was near the opposite wall of the cavern.

This imbued the young sergeant with a daring idea.

Why could he not creep up close behind this later on, and crawl under its edge. He even saw the possibility of a rescue.

But he was compelled to wait until night came.

Then at a late hour the Indians began to retire to rest.

Sentries were posted, and precautions of the usual sort were employed. Squaws and children retired to the tepees.

But the braves, Indian boys and dogs all curled up on the floor, and were quickly asleep.

The fires burned low and the whole place was in deep shadow.

The time for action had come.

Vane cautiously crept along the cavern walls toward the tepee in which the captive maiden was.

An old Apache squaw sat at the door as guard. But she was half asleep, and Vane easily wormed his way up to the flap of the structure.

He cautiously raised it and sent a thrilling whisper into the interior.

"Hello! Keep cool and don't betray me. I am here to save you!"

He heard a rustling movement, and then a soft voice came back:

"Who are you?"

"Sergeant Vane, of the Seventh United States Cavalry."

A stifled scream came back.

"God be praised! You have come to save me?"

"Yes; but you must be shrewd. All depends upon careful work. If we are betrayed, then all is lost."

"I understand," replied the captive maiden. "I will obey your instructions."

"Then carefully come this way. Wait until I see if the coast is clear."

The young girl drew near to the flap of the tepee. Vane glided around the corner and watched the sleeping squaw a moment.

She had not been disturbed. The Apaches evidently trusted in the security of the cavern and did not believe it possible for the young girl to escape from the cavern even if she did from the tepee.

It was a golden opportunity.

Vane quickly seized it.

He glided back to the lifted flap and whispered:

"Come!"

He extended a hand and grasped that of the young girl. It's soft touch thrilled him he knew not why.

He led her softly into the shadows. Along the cavern wall they crept.

Vane saw the long passage leading to the outer air; all was darkness within it.

But he knew that Indian sentries were posted on its extremity. It would hardly be safe to attempt that.

He had rescued his fair charge from the tepee. But how to get out of the cavern now was the problem.

If he could succeed in doing this there was no doubt but that he could safely return to the Clipper and a great stroke would have been gained.

"We have gained something," whispered Vane, "but we are not yet out of the woods. What shall we do?"

"We entered the cavern by yonder passage," declared the maiden.

"But I hardly think it will be safe to attempt to escape in that direction. There are guards there."

"You are right."

"You know of no other outlet?"

"None, except possibly the river."

"The river!"

Vane at once saw a clew.

"Then they use the river as a means of egress?"

"Oh, yes; there are lots of canoes down there on the bank."

"That is our chance then," said Vane, eagerly. "I will go forward and reconnoiter. Do you remain here quietly by the wall."

"I will."

Vane now crept cautiously down to the river bank. It was true that there were canoes there.

The sergeant found one in a shadowed spot, and partly launched it. Then he crept back for his fair charge.

She was waiting for him, and quickly they crept down to the water's edge.

"Now for freedom!" whispered Vane, as he helped her into the boat and pushed off into the current.

With a few swift strokes of the paddle the canoe was out in the stream.

Then it shot forward at rapid speed.

Vane had all he could do to keep the light craft straight in the current. It raced on through the black cavern arches.

Suddenly the young girl clutched his arm with a dull cry.

"My soul! I fear we are lost!"

Vane saw the cause of her trepidation at the same moment. Just ahead was a star of light.

It was a distant torch carried doubtless by a party who were coming up the stream.

They would be sure to meet and the result of this might be fatal. Vane comprehended this and was prepared for desperate action.

Every moment they drew nearer.

CHAPTER XI.

TROOP H. IS FOUND.

Down the current shot the canoe. The glare of the torch was every moment growing plainer.

Then the outlines of the coming canoe and its occupants were plainly seen.

One savage sat in the bow like an image carved out of stone holding the foaming brand.

Others to the number of six were paddling with all their strength.

Vane had resolved upon a course of action.

He knew that all depended upon shooting by the foe so quickly that they would not be recognized.

So he bent to the paddle and sent the canoe flying down the current. The next moment he shot into the circle of firelight.

He heard a grunt of surprise from the savage with the torch, then he flashed by and into the gloom below.

Whether he had been recognized by the foe or not he was not sure. But he was fain to believe that he had not for they made no move at pursuit.

This was the last seen of the Apaches.

An hour later they shot out into open air. In the moonlight Vane saw that the river here ran through a wide plain.

Back of them was the Magallon range. The young sergeant knew that it was necessary to return over them if he wished to reach the Clipper.

So he did not continue further down the current, but ran the canoe ashore.

He assisted his fair charge out and they climbed up the bank.

They had escaped from the Apache stronghold, but perils of deadly sort yet thickly beset them.

Vane had not a weapon of any kind.

Had he been beset by beast or man he must have defended himself with his hands alone.

There was not the least possibility but that the foe would trail them. All depended upon reaching a place of safety at once.

So he said to the young girl:

"I hope you can bear up for a long walk. We may have far to go."

"I am strong," she replied, eagerly. "Oh, anything is preferable to that awful life in the power of those savages."

With this they set out for the tramp over the mountains, Vane assisting her over rough places.

And as they went on, the young sergeant's curiosity finally got the better of him.

"You will pardon me," he said, "if I venture to ask you a personal question. But I have some curiosity to know the name of the lady whom I have been so fortunate as to be able to serve."

"Certainly," she replied, quickly. "I am Agnes Montrose, and my father is the owner of the Valley Fork Ranch, two hundred miles below here."

"Oh!" exclaimed Vane, with interest, "then you are the daughter of Col. Montrose?"

"Then you know my father?"

"Quite well. He has often visited our camp. I have also spent days at your ranch, but I never knew that he had a daughter."

"I have lived upon the ranch very little since I was twelve years old," she said; "for six years I have been studying at an eastern college. But I came back six months ago to spend some time with papa on the ranch."

"Then you like ranch life?"

"Very much."

"But—how did you happen to fall into the clutches of Alchise?"

"Oh, that horrible monster! This is how it was: Some years ago Alchise and his tribe were at peace with our people. He came frequently to the ranch and seemed to take a great fancy to me. One day he proposed to my father that I should be given to him, to be his squaw when I became old enough.

"Of course my father rejected the idea with anger. This made Alchise very ugly, and shortly after that he went on the warpath."

"The miserable hound!" exploded Vane, "he ought to have been shot for his insolence!"

"Well," continued Agnes, "he made a boast that I should yet fall into his power. He carried this out.

"Several days ago I was out on the range on my fleet pony, Sultan. Where the Apaches came from I do not know, but I was suddenly surrounded by them, and Alchise brought me here. You know the rest."

"Do you remember stopping at a spring just before entering the hills?" asked Vane eagerly.

"Yes; our horses were very dry."

"Well," declared the young sergeant, "I was hidden in the chaparral there and saw you. I immediately took the trail and have not left it since."

Then Vane told of the Clipper and Frank Reade, Jr.

Agnes Montrose listened with the deepest interest. Her wonderment was great at the description of the Clipper.

They were now well into the mountains again.

They were skirting a section of the mountain wall when suddenly Agnes came to a stop.

"A light!" she whispered.

"Where?" asked Vane in surprise.

"Over there."

The young sergeant saw the glimmer of a camp-fire just to the right in a clump of mesquite.

He saw moving forms, and was for a moment undecided what to do.

Then a startling thing occurred.

There came a guttural grunt at his elbow, and a giant savage stood before him.

In that one swift instant comprehension, decision and action were simultaneous in Vane's mind.

Quick as a flash he let out with his right. The fist came in contact with the savage's jaw.

The brute went down as if kicked by a mule.

Then Vane waited to hear no more. He half carried Agnes up a steep path to his right. Up the mountain side he ran and climbed.

He came out upon a narrow shelf. A huge mouthed cavern yawned before him.

It was guarded by what looked like a high breastwork. Suddenly a light flashed over this and a voice cried:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

Vane knew the military hail at once, and answered:

"Friends!"

"Advance, friends, and give the password!"

"I have no password!" replied Vane, "but I am Sergeant Vane, of the Seventh U. S. Cavalry. Who are you?"

A number of excited exclamations were heard, then forms in soldiers' uniforms appeared over the wall.

"Where the devil did you come from? Dropped from the clouds?"

"No," replied Vane. "I came up a path back here."

The others were astounded. One of them came forward with a lantern.

"By the gods!" he gasped. "It is Allen Vane of the Seventh."

"Lieut. Hinks of Troop H," cried Vane, in amazement. "Why, the whole country is agog over you. Gen. Crook believes you annihilated."

"Well, we did come near it!" agreed Hinks. "We have been besieged here for weeks and unable to get down. The Apaches below there are thicker than flies. Several times we have been near starvation. But how on earth did you get through their lines?"

"Lines!" exclaimed Vane, in surprise. "It must have been pure luck and chance."

"I'll wager it couldn't be done again in a hundred attempts."

Then Vane told of his treatment of the single savage whom he had met below.

The cavalrymen listened with interest.

"Well, it was a miracle that you got through!" declared Hinks.

"We have been unable to send a courier for aid and here we have been cooped up for weeks.

"While the world has believed you exterminated," declared Vane.

Explanations were more fully indulged in. Then comfortable quarters were provided for Agnes in the cavern.

Vane talked until an early hour in the morning with Hinks. Before morning it was decided that on the morrow a decided break for liberty should be made.

Vane retired a short while later to gain needed rest.

He had certainly accomplished important things since leaving the Clipper.

He had rescued Agnes Montrose from Alchise and had found Troop H. He had good reason for self-congratulations.

Frank Reade, Jr., was overjoyed at sight of the Clipper.

It was certainly a gratifying fact that he had not been obliged to search for it.

The electric light was turned full into the dark mouth of the cavern into which the river ran.

It was evident that Barney and Pomp had anticipated his return from that direction.

Frank was almost instantly seen by Barney, who rushed out excitedly to meet him.

"Begorra, Mither Frank, it's glad we are to see yez back!" cried the Celt. "But shure ye're wet to the skin! An' the other gintleman, phwere is he?"

"I fear that Vane is drowned!" said Frank, seriously.

"Och hone, yez don't say that!"

"Yes, the boat overturned and I lost sight of him in the rapids."

"Golly, dat am drefful fing!" cried Pomp, in distressed tones. "He was such a fine gemman!"

"There is one chance that he may have swam and reached the outlet of the river. I believe that it comes out on the other side of the mountain."

"Begorra, then, we ought to thry it there!" cried Barney.

"And we will!" said Frank. "Get everything ready. We will go around the mountain at once."

Frank had made this decision, and the Clipper would have left at once, when suddenly a thrilling incident occurred.

Down the current of the river, and making for the cavern, came half a dozen canoes, packed with Apaches.

They came upon the Clipper so suddenly that they could not turn back. Instantly an alarm yell went up.

"Golly fo' gracious!" screamed Pomp, "dere dey are, a hull war paity. Gib it to de rapsallions!"

And the darky picked up his rifle and rushed to a loophole, as did Barney himself.

Frank sprung for the electric gun.

Already bullets and arrows were rattling against the steel sides of the Clipper.

With the electric gun Frank could have annihilated the whole gang of them.

But again his aversion to the taking of human life asserted itself, and he refrained.

But Barney and Pomp were peppering the foe hotly from their safe cover. The fire was returned.

But the Apaches were striving to reach the cavern, which they, soon did, and vanished from sight.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE RAFT.

This terminated the affair, but it had one good result.

It proved to Frank beyond all doubt that the Apaches really had a stronghold in the cavern.

Without a doubt Alchise and his gang were there quartered. This impelled Frank to hesitate in his purpose to go around the mountains.

It occurred to him as a better and safer plan to carry out his original scheme of floating into the underground river on a raft.

"Surely," he reflected, "if these savages can make the passage with canoes, we can do it with the raft."

Frank had previously calculated the cost and trouble of such a move. He believed it quite feasible.

Finally he decided upon it.

No time was to be lost.

Barney and Pomp were put to work with axes. Before nightfall the frame of the raft was upon the river.

All it required was binding together. This was done with heavy spikes and poles. By midnight the raft was completed.

Frank lost no time.

He ran the machine aboard the raft. The steering power was by means of long sweeps in the rear.

It seemed like a hazardous and almost foolhardy undertaking to launch this enterprise.

But nothing was impossible for a man of Frank Reade, Jr.'s build.

With the coming of daylight the raft with the Clipper on it was loosened from the bank.

It swept out into the current and went on down the river.

A moment later it was in the cavern. Then began the swift ride.

Swaying and pitching fearfully the raft hurried on. Into the rapids it went.

For a time it seemed as if the Clipper must collide with the cavern roof or the raft must go to pieces.

But nothing of the kind occurred.

When the steep fall in the rapids was reached the raft shipped a large quantity of water.

But it held together and went safely over.

Barney and Pomp were at the sweeps, Frank was forward.

Suddenly a bright light was seen ahead. It was the firelight of the Apache camp.

Then the raft shot into the great pool where Vane had swam some hours before.

The effect upon the Apaches there congregated was startling.

In an instant all was an uproar.

Naturally the appearance of such a leviathan as the Clipper in their midst created a sensation.

They swarmed from the tepees and the arches of the cavern and pandemonium was the result.

Barney illumined every dark corner with the search-light.

Pomp with his rifle was at one of the loopholes and Frank went to the electric gun.

The Apaches came yelling down to the water's edge.

They were evidently disposed to resent this invasion of the monster into their midst and assumed the aggressive.

It was a lively scrimmage which followed.

Hundreds of the red foe plunged into the water and swam out to the raft. They began to climb upon it.

But Frank was engaged in defeating a far different plan.

He saw that many of the foe were seeking retreat by the outer passage, and an idea occurred to him to block this.

He knew that if he could hold the blood-thirsty crew in that limited space he could literally annihilate them.

So he drew a line upon the cavern outlet and sent a dynamite projectile flying into it.

The effect was just what he had desired.

Tons of rock were hurled downward, killing a score of red fiends and literally blocking the passage.

They were now hemmed in.

There was no escape for them save by way of the river.

Realizing this the desperate crew united in a terrific attack upon the Clipper.

Down the river's bank they now surged, making for the raft. Hundreds of them were in the water.

Frank now turned the gun upon these. He sent a projectile into the river.

A column of water many feet in circumference rose to the very roof of the cavern. When it descended many were crushed or drowned.

It was madness for the savages to face the deadly electric gun.

In a very few moments they were thoroughly whipped and cowered like beasts upon the river bank.

Frank had no intention of causing useless slaughter. His only desire was to subject the foe and bring them to terms.

So he desisted from firing. The raft floated along shore and for a time silence reigned.

Then a number of chiefs appeared upon the bank with hands uplifted.

It was in token of a truce, and Frank was disposed to grant it. He stepped out on the platform.

The chiefs came down to the water's edge. They could easily step aboard the raft which they did.

As they approached one of them addressed Frank in the Mexican tongue.

"Red Dog salutes his white brother," he said, "he has a terrible gun. We are much afraid of it."

"And you have reason to be!" declared Frank, "it will kill you all, unless you come to terms."

"What are my white brother's terms?" asked the chief with some humility.

"You are not Alchise?"

"I am Red Dog! These are my red brothers. Alchise is a great chief and is out on the warpath now."

"Very well, Red Dog," said Frank, brusquely. "I will state my terms. You must come out of this place, go down to the reservation and make peace with the Great Father at Washington. Also you have in your power a captive white girl."

Red Dog's face lit up.

"My white brother is wrong," he said. "She is not here now."

"Not here now?" exclaimed Frank. "What has become of her?"

Red Dog shook his head.

"We do not know."

"You don't know? Come now, that will not do. I want the truth."

"Red Dog's tongue is never crooked," replied the Apache chief, with spirit, "the white girl was in her tepee at night. In the morning she was gone. We have not seen her, but we found her trail and that of the man who rescued her."

In an instant a lightning-like comprehension flashed over Frank.

"It was Vane," he thought. "Thank God! this is the best of news."

Then he questioned Red Dog closer, and learned that one of the canoes had vanished at the same time.

The rescuer had taken his fair charge and gone down the river.

Frank was too much excited to hardly be able to express himself.

"That is the best of luck," he declared. "We will now go on down the river and find them."

Then he impressed upon Red Dog the necessity of making peace.

The Apache chief promised sacredly.

Then the raft swung out and went on down the current.

It was a swift ride the rest of the way.

But working hard at the sweeps Barney and Pomp kept the raft straight.

On it swept, and in due course shot out into the open, where the river ran through a level plain.

Here the raft was tied to the shore and after an infinite amount of labor the Clipper was disembarked.

Then Barney who was almost as keen on a trail as an Indian found the footprints of the two.

He noted the direction in which they went and Frank said:

"He has gone back over the mountain to find the Clipper."

"An' begorra the ledly is wid him," declared Barney.

"Yes. I think it would be well for us to pursue."

"Golly! dat am de bes' f'ing," averred Pomp.

So the Clipper was sent along on the trail. But the mountain path was too narrow for the machine.

"Never mind!" said Frank. "We can perhaps make them see or hear us by coasting along the base of the hills here!"

So the Clipper was sent along looking for an opening to enter the hills.

This came. It was a canyon which was reasonably smooth.

But no sooner had the Clipper entered it when a startling sound was heard in the distance.

"Golly!" cried Pomp, "wha'ebber was dat noise?"

"Bejabbers, phwera's yer ears?" cried Barney, excitedly. "Shure it's the foiring av guns over yender."

"Somebody is having a hot fight," declared Frank. "It sounds like the carbines of a troop of cavalry."

"Maybe it am dat lost troop," cried Pomp.

"Troop H!" exclaimed Frank. "Perhaps that is so. We will find out."

The machine was sent along at full speed down.

Between buttes and peaks of stone, huge natural monoliths and boulders the Clipper picked its rough way.

Suddenly Barney cried:

"Wud yez luk at that, sor? It's a bould foight to be shure!"

Barney pointed far up the mountain side where a startling scene was to be witnessed.

There myriads of savages were seen trying to force their way up the steep under cover of rocks and trees.

High above was the mouth of a cavern and across this was a rampart of stone. It was ablaze with the flash of carbines.

It was the besieged Troop H defending their position valiantly.

Sergeant Vane was there with them and fighting hard.

But just as the sergeant was loading his carbine he looked down and saw the Clipper heave into view.

A wild cry went up from him.

"Hurrah!" he screamed. "We are saved!"

"Saved!" exclaimed Lieut. Hinks. "What do you mean?"

"There is the Electric Clipper!"

"The Electric Clipper?"

"Yes, and Frank Reade, Jr. Wait until I signal him."

The sergeant ran back and secured the company guidon. This he waved over the rampart.

The signal was seen by Frank Reade, Jr., and at once answered. A great cheer went up from the troops.

"We are saved!" cried Sergeant Vane, joyfully.

"Saved!" exclaimed Hinks. "How do you make that out?"

CHAPTER XIII.

WHICH IS THE END.

"You shall see!" declared the sergeant, confidently. "See that gun on the bow of the Clipper?"

"A small signal gun!"

"An electric dynamite gun!" declared the sergeant. "You shall see how quickly the foe will be routed."

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do!"

Meanwhile Frank had been carefully studying the situation. He did not want to make a mistake.

"The soldiers are all in that cavern," he said; "I think I can understand. The coast is clear."

He immediately went forward and trained the deadly gun.

He selected a point which was literally swarming with the foe. Then he drew a careful line.

He pressed the button.

In an instant the projectile struck the face of the cliff in the midst of the attacking Apaches.

The shock was like that of an earthquake.

The foe were tossed right and left, tons of rock heaved upwards and killed fully a score of the savages.

It was terrible slaughter.

Again and again the gun was trained upon the ledge. Before such an awful destroyer human nerve could not stand.

In less time than it takes to tell it the whole crew were in retreat.

The victory was won and Troop H was saved.

That moment the electric clipper and its famous young owner had accomplished a deed which must cover them with fame and glory.

The soldiers charged from their position, and the Apaches were utterly routed.

Then all gathered about the wonderful electric clipper which had been their salvation.

Sergeant Vane was escorting Agnes Montrose to a safe refuge aboard the clipper, when they came upon the body of an Indian lying upon the ground.

A terrible gap was torn in his side from which the life blood was pouring. There was an awful light of agony in his fading eyes, but he managed to beckon to them as they were passing.

"My God!" exclaimed Vane in horror. "It is Alchise!"

It was indeed the fighting Apache chief. As Vane bent over him, he said:

"Alchise dies. He goes to the happy hunting grounds. Make peace with his people!"

"If they will make peace there will be no more fighting," said Vane.

Just then Alchise caught sight of Agnes. He had a light of eagerness in his dying eyes which he could not resist.

She went forward at once and took his hand. The chief looked at Vane, and said hoarsely:

"She is not for me. Maniton has forbidden. She is for my white brother."

Had the occasion been less serious Vane would have blushed to the roots of his hair. But as it was he simply held the chief's head while he breathed his last.

Later in the day, Vane with his own hands dug a grave for the dead chief and properly buried him.

At its head upon a slab of slate he wrote:

"Alchise, Chief of the Magallon Apaches. Died in battle."

Then he murmured a prayer for the heathen soul, and went back to camp to prepare for a leave taking of the region.

Some weeks later there was quite a gathering at the ranch of Col. Montrose.

Gen. Crook and his men were there, and also Frank Reade, Jr., and the Electric Clipper.

Peace was concluded with the Magallon Apaches. The region was once more habitable to the white man.

Some weeks later the famous Electric Clipper was shipped back to Readestown.

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp went with it after a grand farewell ovation was given them.

A year later Frank received cards announcing the wedding of Allan Vane and Agnes Montrose. And so, dear reader, do we happily end our story.

[THE END.]

MULLIGAN'S BOARDING HOUSE.

By "BRICKTOP."

Profusely illustrated by THOMAS WORTH. This book illustrates the Comic side of Life, full of funny Adventures and Novel Situations, abounding in Jokes and Original Sayings. Price 10 cents.

For sale by all newsdealers, or we will send it to you upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore St., New York.

TO EUROPE BY MISTAKE.

By "BRICKTOP."

Telling all about how it happened. Containing twelve illustrations by the great comic artist, THOMAS WORTH. Price 10 cents.

For sale by all newsdealers, or we will send it to you upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore St., New York.

JOINING THE FREEMASONS.

By "BRICKTOP."

A humorous account of the Initiating, Passing, and Raising of the Candidate, together with the Grips and Signs. Fully Illustrated by THOMAS WORTH. Price 10 cents.

For sale by all newsdealers, or we will send it to you upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore St., New York.

OUR SERVANT GIRLS.

By "BRICKTOP."

This book cannot be surpassed for Fun, Interesting Situations, and the humorous side of Home Life. Abounding in illustrations by THOMAS WORTH. Price 10 cents.

For sale by all newsdealers, or we will send it to you upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore St., New York.

ZEB SMITH'S COUNTRY STORE.

By "BRICKTOP."

Handsomely illustrated by THOMAS WORTH. A Laugh on Every Page. Illuminated Cover. Price Ten Cents.

For sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or will be sent post-paid upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore Street, N. Y.

ON A JURY.

By "BRICKTOP."

Copiously illustrated by THOMAS WORTH. Side-Splitting Fun from Beginning to End. Handsome Cover. Price Ten Cents.

For sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or will be sent post-paid upon receipt of price. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
P. O. Box 2730. 34 & 36 North Moore Street, N. Y.

Useful and Instructive Books.

HOW TO MAKE A MAGIC LANTERN. Containing a description of the lantern, together with its history and invention. Also full directions for its use and for painting slides. Handsomely illustrated, by John Allen. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or will be sent to your address, postpaid, on receipt of price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 and 36 North Moore Street, New York. Box 2730.

HOW TO DO ELECTRICAL TRICKS.—Containing a large collection of instructive and highly amusing electrical tricks, together with illustrations. By A. Anderson. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers, or sent post-paid, upon receipt of the price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 & 36 North Moore St., New York. P. O. Box 2730.

HOW TO DO CHEMICAL TRICKS.—Containing over one hundred highly amusing and instructive tricks with chemicals. By A. Anderson. Handsomely illustrated. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers, or sent post-paid, upon receipt of price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 & 36 North Moore Street, New York. P. O. Box 2730.

HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.—By Harry Kennedy. The secret given away. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions, by a practical professor (delighting multitudes every night with his wonderful imitations), can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the GREATEST BOOK ever published, and there's MILLIONS (of fun) in it. **HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.** For sale by all newsdealers, price 10 cents; or send price to the office of THE BOXES OF NEW YORK, and receive a copy by return mail. Address Frank Tousey, publisher, 34 and 36 North Moore street, New York. P. O. Box 2730.

HOW TO BECOME A PHOTOGRAPHER. Containing useful information regarding the Camera and how to work it; also how to make Photographic Magic Lantern Slides and other Transparencies. Handsomely illustrated. By Captain W. De W. Abney. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or will be sent to your address, postpaid, on receipt of price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 & 36 N. Moore St., N. Y. Box 2730.

HOW TO DO PUZZLES.—Containing over 300 interesting puzzles and conundrums with key to same. A complete book. Fully illustrated. By A. Anderson. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers, or sent post-paid, upon receipt of the price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 and 36 North Moore St., New York. P. O. Box 2730.

HOW TO DO SLEIGHT OF HAND.—Containing over fifty of the latest and best tricks used by magicians. Also containing the secret of second sight. Fully illustrated. By A. Anderson. Price 10 cents. For sale by all newsdealers, or sent post-paid, upon receipt of price. Address Frank Tousey, Publisher, 34 & 36 North Moore Street, New York. P. O. Box 2730.

FRANK TOUSEY'S UNITED STATES DISTANCE TABLES, POCKET COMPANION, AND GUIDE.—Giving the official distances on all the railroads of the United States and Canada. Also, tables of distances by water to foreign ports, hack fares in the principal cities, reports of the census, etc., etc., making it one of the most complete and handy books published. Price 10 cents. For sale by every newsdealer, or sent to your address, postage free, on receipt of the price. Frank Tousey, publisher, 34 and 36 North Moore street, New York. Box 2730.

How To Do Electrical Tricks.

Containing a Large Collection of Instructive and Highly Amusing
Electrical Tricks, Together With Illustrations. By
A. Anderson. Price 10 Cents.

For sale by all newsdealers, or sent, post-paid, upon receipt of price. Address

Box 2730.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 34 & 36 North Moore Street, New York.

Latest Issues of THE 5 CENT COMIC LIBRARY.

- No.
22 Shorty Junior on His Ear; or, Always on a Racket, by Peter Pad
23 Jim Jams; or, Jack of All Trades, by Tom Teaser
24 Tommy Dodd; or, Bounced Everywhere, by Peter Pad
25 Sweet Sixteen; or, The Family Pet, by Sam Smiley
26 Shorty and the Count; or, The Two Great Unmashed, by Peter Pad
27 Nip and Flip; or, Two of a Kind, by Tom Teaser
28 Not a Cent; or, Across the Continent on Wind, by Sam Smiley
29 London Bob; or, An English Boy in America, by Peter Pad
30 Ebenezer Crow, by Peter Pad
31 Bon Short; or, One of Our Boys, by Sam Smiley
32 A Nice Quiet Boy; or, Never Suspected, by Tom Teaser
33 Shorty in Search of His Dad, by Peter Pad
34 Stuttering Sam, by Peter Pad
35 The Shortys' Trip Around the World, by Peter Pad
36 Hildebrandt Fitzgum; or, My Quiet Little Cousin, by Tom Teaser
37 Tommy Bounce, Jr.; or, A Chip of the Old Block, by Peter Pad
38 Twins; or, Which Was the Other? by Sam Smiley
39 Bob Rollick; or, What Was He Born For? by Peter Pad
40 The Shortys Married and Settled Down, by Peter Pad
41 Tommy Bounce, Jr., in College, by Peter Pad
42 The Shortys Out for Fun, by Peter Pad
43 Billy Bakkus, the Boy With the Big Mouth, by Commodore Ah-Look
44 "Whiskers;" or, One Year's Fun at Belltop Academy, by Sam Smiley
45 The Shortys Out Fishing, by Peter Pad
46 The Shortys Out Gunning, by Peter Pad
47 Bob Rollick, the Yankee Notion Drummer, by Peter Pad
48 Sassy Sam; or, A Bootblack's Voyage Around the World, by Commodore Ah-Look
49 The Shortys' Farming, by Sam Smiley
50 Muldoon's Night School, by Tom Teaser
51 Dandy Dick, the Doctor's Son; or, The Village Terror, by Tom Teaser
52 Sassy Sam Summer. A Sequel to "Sassy Sam," by Commodore Ah-Look
53 The Jolly Travelers; or, Around the World for Fun, by Peter Pad
54 The Shortys in the Wild West, by Peter Pad
55 Muldoon, the Sport, by Tom Teaser
56 Cheeky and Chipper; or, Through Thick and Thin, by Commodore Ah-Look
57 Two Hard Nuts; or, A Term of Fun at Dr. Crocker's Academy, by Sam Smiley
58 The Shortys' Country Store, by Peter Pad
59 Muldoon's Vacation, by Tom Teaser
60 Jack Hawser's Tavern, by Peter Pad
61 Ike; or, He Never Got Left, by Tom Teaser
62 Joseph Jump and His Old Blind Nag, by Peter Pad
63 Two in a Box; or, The Long and Short of It, by Tom Teaser
64 The Shorty Kids; or, Three Chaps of Three Old Blocks, by Peter Pad
65 Mike McQuinnness; or, Traveling for Pleasure, by Tom Teaser
66 The Shortys' Christmas Snaps, by Peter Pad
67 The Bounce Twins; or, The Two Worst Boys in the World, by Sam Smiley
68 Nimble Nip, the Imp of the School, by Tom Teaser
69 Sam Spry, the New York Drummer; or, Business Before Pleasure, by Peter Pad
70 Muldoon Out West, by Tom Teaser
71 Those Quiet Twins, by Peter Pad
72 Muldoon, the Fireman, by Tom Teaser
73 A Rolling Stone; or, Jack Ready's Life of Fun, by Peter Pad
74 An Old Boy; or, Maloney After Education, by Tom Teaser
75 Tumbling Tim; or, Traveling With a Circus, by Peter Pad
76 Judge Cleary's Country Court, by Tom Teaser
77 Jack Ready's School Scrapes, by Peter Pad
78 Muldoon, the Solid Man, by Tom Teaser
79 Joe Junk, the Whaler; or, Anywhere for Fun, by Peter Pad
80 The Deacon's Son; or, The Imp of the Village Combination, by Tom Teaser
81 Behind the Scenes; or, Out With a New York Combination, by Peter Pad
82 The Funny Four, by Peter Pad
83 Muldoon's Base Ball Club, by Tom Teaser
84 Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Boston, by Tom Teaser
85 A Bad Egg; or, Hard to Crack, by Tom Teaser
86 Sam; or, The Troublesome Foundling, by Peter Pad
87 Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Philadelphia, by Tom Teaser
88 Jimmy Grimes; or, Sharp, Smart and Sassy, by Tom Teaser
89 Little Tommy Bounce; or, Something Like His Dad, by Peter Pad
90 Muldoon's Picnic, by Tom Teaser
91 Little Tommy Bounce on His Travels; or, Doing America for Fun, by Peter Pad

Latest Issues of Frank Reade Library

By "NONAME."

Price 5 Cents.

- No.
35 Frank Reade, Jr., Exploring Mexico in His New Air-Ship.
36 Fighting the Slave Hunters; or, Frank Reade, Jr., in Central Africa.
37 The Electric Man; or, Frank Reade, Jr., in Australia.
38 The Electric Horse; or, Frank Reade, Jr., and His Father in Search of the Lost Treasure of the Peruvians.
39 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Team; or, In Search of a Missing Man.
40 Around the World Under Water; or, The Wonderful Cruise of a Submarine Boat.
41 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Chase Through the Clouds.
42 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search for a Sunken Ship; or, Working for the Government.
43 Lost in the Land of Fire; or, Across the Pampas in the Electric Turret.
44 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Queen Clipper of the Clouds, Part I.
45 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Queen Clipper of the Clouds, Part II.
46 Six Weeks in the Great Whirlpool; or, Strange Adventures in a Submarine Boat.
47 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Monitor of the Air; or, Helping a Friend in Need.
48 Frank Reade, Jr., Exploring a River of Mystery.
49 Frank Reade, Jr., in the Sea of Sand, and His Discovery of a Lost People.
50 Chased Across the Sahara; or, The Bedouin's Captive.
51 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Air Yacht; or, The Great Inventor Among the Aztecs.
52 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Greyhound of the Air; or, The Search for the Mountain of Gold.
53 From Pole to Pole; or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Strange Submarine Voyage.
54 The Mystic Brand; or, Frank Reade, Jr., and His Overland Stage Upon the Staked Plains.
55 Frank Reade, Jr., in the Far West; or, The Search for a Lost Gold Mine.
56 Frank Reade, Jr., With His Air Ship in Asia; or, A Flight Across the Steppes.
57 Frank Reade, Jr., and His New Torpedo Boat; or, At War With the Brazilian Rebels.
58 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Coach; or, The Search for the Isle of Diamonds. Part I.
59 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Coach; or, The Search for the Isle of Diamonds. Part II.
60 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Magnetic Gun-Carriage; or, Working for the U. S. Mail.
61 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Ice Boat; or, Lost in the Land of Crimson Snow. Part I.
62 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Ice Boat; or, Lost in the Land of Crimson Snow. Part II.
63 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Engine of the Clouds; or, Chased Around the World in the Sky.
64 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Cyclone; or, Thrilling Adventures in No Man's Land. Part I.
65 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Cyclone; or, Thrilling Adventures in No Man's Land. Part II.
66 The Sunken Pirate; or, Frank Reade, Jr., in Search of a Treasure at the Bottom of the Sea.
67 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Air-Boat; or, Hunting Wild Beasts for a Circus.
68 The Black Range; or, Frank Reade, Jr., Among the Cowboys With his New Electric Caravan.
69 From Zone to Zone; or, The Wonderful Trip of Frank Reade, Jr., With His Latest Air-Ship.
70 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Prairie Schooner; or, Fighting the Mexican Horse Thieves.
71 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Cruiser of the Lakes; or, A Journey Through Africa by Water.
72 Arift in Africa; or, Frank Reade, Jr., Among the Ivory Hunters With His New Electric Wagon.
73 Six Weeks in the Clouds; or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Air-Ship, the Thunderbolt of the Skies.
74 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Air Racer; or, Around the Globe in Thirty Days.
75 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Flying Ice Ship; or, Driven Adrift in the Frozen Sky.
76 Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Sea Engine; or, Hunting for a Sunken Diamond Mine.
77 Frank Reade, Jr., Exploring a Submarine Mountain; or, Lost at the Bottom of the Sea.
78 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Electric Buckboard; or, Thrilling Adventures in North Australia.
79 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search for the Sea Serpent; or, Six Thousand Miles Under the Sea.
80 Frank Reade, Jr.'s Desert Explorer; or, The Underground City of the Sahara.
81 Frank Reade, Jr.'s New Electric Air-Ship the "Ze-phyr;" or, From North to South Around the Globe. Part I.
82 Frank Reade, Jr.'s New Electric Air-Ship the "Ze-phyr;" or, From North to South Around the Globe. Part II.

Latest Issues of the YOUNG SLEUTH LIBRARY. Price 5 Cents.

- No.
33 Young Sleuth's Denver Divide; or, For Half a Great Reward.
34 Young Sleuth and the Lady Ferret; or, The Girl Detective in Peril.
35 Young Sleuth's Cincinnati Search; or, Working a Strange Claw.
36 Young Sleuth's Great Circus Case; or, Bareback Bill's Last Act.
37 Young Sleuth in New Orleans; or, The Keen Detective's Quick Catch.
38 Young Sleuth's \$100,000 Game; or, Monte Carlo in New York.
39 Young Sleuth's St. Louis Capture; or, Spreading a Double Net.
40 Young Sleuth at the World's Fair; or, Piping a Mystery of Chicago.
41 Young Sleuth's Pittsburgh Discovery; or, The Keen Detective's Insurance Case.
42 Young Sleuth and the King of Crooks; or, Tracking Down the Worst Man in New York.
43 Young Sleuth in the "Lava Beds" of New York; or, The Tenderloin District by Night.
44 Young Sleuth and the Bunco Sharps; or, The Keen Detective's Winning Hand.
45 Young Sleuth Under the Docks of New York; or, The Queen of the Queer in New York.
46 A 50 to 1 Shot; or, Young Sleuth as a Jockey.
47 Young Sleuth and the Express Robbers; or, Ferreting Out a Mystery of the Railway.
48 Won by a Neck; or, Young Sleuth's Best Race.
49 A Straight Tip; or, Young Sleuth at the American Derby.
50 At Long Odds; or, Young Sleuth's Lightning Finish.
51 Young Sleuth and the Great Wall Street Mystery; or, Tracing a Strange Tragedy of a Broker's Office.
52 Young Sleuth and the Opera House Mystery; or, Murdered Behind the Scenes.
53 Young Sleuth Under the Docks of New York; or, The River Thieves and the Keen Detective.
54 Young Sleuth and the Mysterious Doctor; or, A Medical Student's Dark Plot.
55 Young Sleuth and the Rival Bank Breakers; or, The Keen Detective's Girl Decoy.
56 Young Sleuth's Flash Light; or, The Dark Mystery of a Wedding Eve.
57 Young Sleuth and the Murder in the State-Room; or, A Mystery of the Ocean.
58 Young Sleuth's Long Trail; or, The Keen Detective After the James Boys.
59 Young Sleuth's Terrible Dilemma; or, One Chance in One Hundred.
60 Young Sleuth and the Murder at the Masked Ball; or, Fighting the League of the Seven Demons.
61 Young Sleuth's Big Contract; or, Cleaning Out the Thugs of Baltimore.
62 Young Sleuth Betrayed; or, The False Detective's Villainy.
63 Young Sleuth's Terrible Test; or, Won at the Risk of Life.
64 Young Sleuth and the Man With the Diamond Eye.
65 Young Sleuth Accused; or, Held for Another's Crime.
66 Young Sleuth's Lost Link; or, Finding Lost Evidence.
67 Young Sleuth's Last Dodge; or, The Keen Detective's Greatest Ruse.
68 Young Sleuth and the Female Smuggler; or, Working For "Uncle Sam."
69 Young Sleuth's Lightning Changes; or, The Gold Brick Gang Taken In.
70 Young Sleuth and the Owls of Owl Mountain; or, The Ghost of Blue Ridge Tavern.
71 Young Sleuth's Last Round; or, The Keen Detective's Best Knock-Out.
72 Young Sleuth's Sharps; or, Sharp Work Among Sharp Crooks.
73 Young Sleuth's Seven Signs; or, The Keen Detective's Magic Trail.
74 Young Sleuth on the Stage; or, An Act Not on the Bills.
75 Young Sleuth at Monte Carlo; or, The Crime of the Casino.
76 Young Sleuth and the Man with the Tattooed Arm; or, Tracking Missing Millions.
77 Young Sleuth in Demiohohn City; or, Waltzing William's Dancing School.
78 Young Sleuth in Siberia; or, Saving a Young American from the Prison Mines.
79 Young Sleuth Almost Knocked Out; or, Nell Blondin's Desperate Game.
80 Young Sleuth and Billy the Kid Number Two; or, The Hidden Ranch of the Panhandle.
81 Young Sleuth's Master Stroke; or, The Lady Detective's Many Masks.
82 Murdered in a Mask; or, Young Sleuth at the French Ball.
83 Young Sleuth in Paris; or, The Keen Detective and the Bomb-Throwers.
84 Young Sleuth and the Italian Brigands; or, The Keen Detective's Greatest Rescue.
85 Young Sleuth and a Dead Man's Secret; or, The Message in the Handle of a Dagger.

All the above libraries are for sale by all newsdealers in the United States and Canada, or sent to your address, post-paid, on receipt of price. Address

P. O. Box 2730.

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 34 & 36 North Moore Street, New York.